

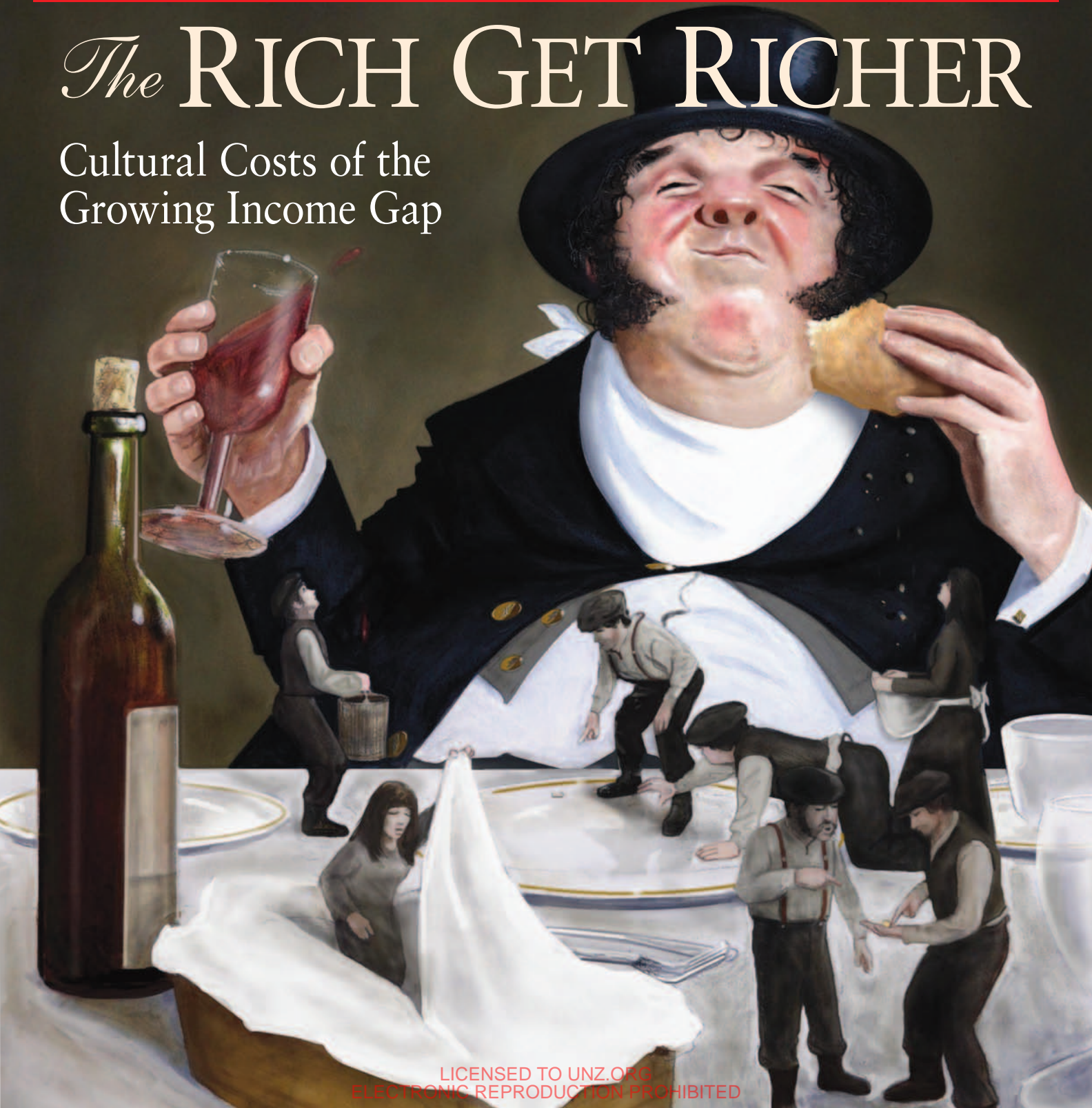
BUCHANAN: A NATION, NOT AN IDEA ■ RELIGIOUS RIGHT'S NEW AGENDA

SEPTEMBER 25, 2006

# The American Conservative

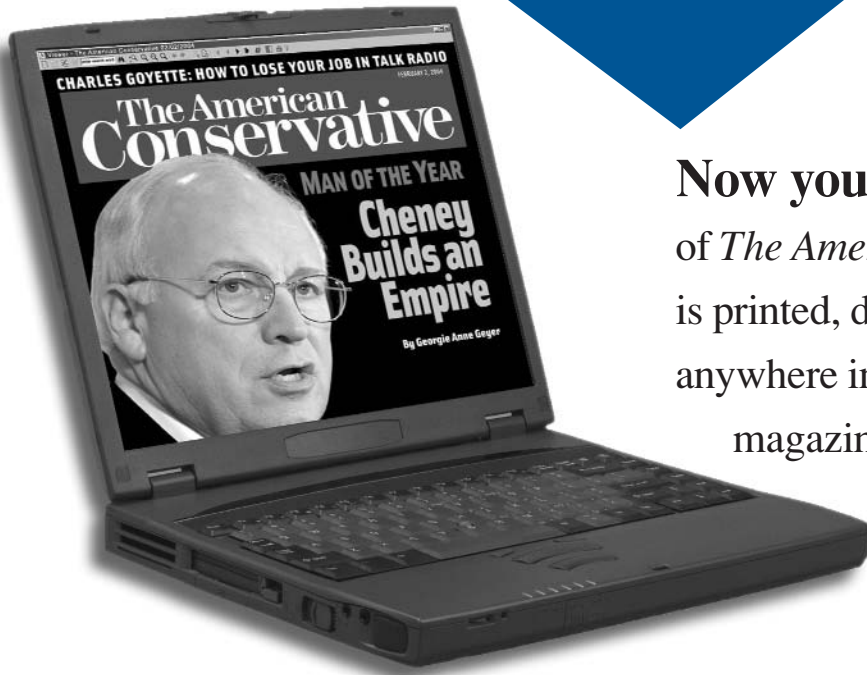
## *The* RICH GET RICHER

Cultural Costs of the  
Growing Income Gap



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[WAR]

## FIVE YEARS OF FOLLY

On Sept. 11, 2001, America entered a dangerous era. Every *TAC* reader surely remembers where he was when he heard the news of hijacked planes striking the World Trade Center and Pentagon. Americans rallied to their government, to Mayor Giuliani, to New York's courageous firefighters, and readied their response. The world also rallied to America: even in Tehran spontaneous candlelight vigils broke out. Nothing seemed more important than destroying the faction—a radical offshoot of Islam—that had done this and making sure it would never happen again.

Five years later, we wish we could report progress. But we cannot. Washington diverted troops from its campaign against the perpetrators to pursue an attack on Saddam Hussein, who had nothing to do with the 9/11 attack. Bin Laden remains alive; President Bush claims not to think about him very much. Over 2,500 Americans have been killed in Iraq—eight times that number maimed or wounded. Afghanistan, five years ago a sanctuary for terrorists, is becoming one again. Iraq, which never had been, has been turned into one by Bush's policies.

We have become al-Qaeda's recruiting sergeant: tens of thousands of Muslims harbor the kind of grievances—dead relatives, destroyed homes—that open more pathways to terrorism than existed before 9/11. International goodwill has evaporated. And the American army is exhausted by a war whose sole remaining purpose may be to save George W. Bush from political embarrassment.

The next five years have to go better, but there is no guarantee that they will.

[CONSERVATISM]

## BUYERS' REMORSE

Much of the mainstream Right has finally begun to cross George W. Bush off its hero list. You hear it at Republican



enclaves on the eastern seaboard, the clubs and parties that produce streams of GOP campaign dollars, where Wall Streeters who two years ago reveled in their status as fundraising "Pioneers" now speak of their embarrassment. You can see signs of it at *National Review*, where even editor Rich Lowry has begun to doubt the winnability of the Iraq War. George Will has been critical of America's exporting "the democratic revolution" to the Mideast for years. Now Joe Scarborough, probably the most regular guy of TV's right-wing talking heads, has devoted a segment of his MSNBC show to the question of "Is Bush an Idiot?" and reinforced the question by running it as a lower screen caption for ten minutes.

Meanwhile, on the neocon part of the Right, many worry that Bush has gone soft, that he no longer has the will to launch all the preventive wars remaining on the neoconservative agenda. (Syria and Iran top the list.) In a major effort to rally the troops, Norman Podhoretz of *Commentary* has written a lengthy essay telling readers to despair not, that the president is still committed to the belligerent "Bush Doctrine."

What is to be made of this? It is encouraging that many on the Right are in the

process of recognizing that the Iraq War was a tragic error and that many link the error to the administration's neoconservative worldview. Perhaps the American Right will one day recover from its backing of Bush's adventure and redefine and remake itself.

But in more immediate terms, this outbreak of common sense means relatively little. Bush remains committed to the Iraq War and to war as a desirable instrument of foreign policy. As Arnaud de Borchgrave astutely put it, Bush is convinced that history will vindicate him and that he is a sort of latter-day Churchill standing against a tide of "Islamofascism" that lesser men want to appease. The conviction runs deep.

So while the new wave of conservative disaffection is welcome, America's next president will be fortunate to have only one disastrous war to clean up after.

[ELECTION]

## SHAYS' REBELLION?

Faced with an increasingly antiwar electorate, a handful of blue-state congressional Republicans are starting to express "reservations" about the president's Iraq adventure. Congressman Chris Shays of Connecticut, a pro-war

GOP moderate from a liberal district, is the latest to see the light—or the poll numbers. After no fewer than 14 trips to Iraq, the *Los Angeles Times* reports that Shays is finally willing to contemplate a timetable for withdrawal. To show he really means business, he promises to hold hearings.

What new information did Shays uncover during his 14th fact-finding mission in Baghdad that eluded him during the first 13? Why, that if the United States does not set some kind of timetable for Iraqi leaders to take responsibility for the security of their own country “they will take years. And there aren’t years available.”

A fine point about the futility of our “stay the course”—or is it “adapt to win”?—strategy in Iraq. Too bad Shays didn’t make it long ago, before he became afraid that his constituents would hand him the same defeat that antiwar voters in Connecticut’s Democratic primary gave Joe Lieberman.

[BELTWAY]

## ACCOUNTABILITY ON HOLD

Only in Washington can a bid to improve transparency in government be blocked by a secret parliamentary maneuver. Sens. Tom Coburn (R-Okla.) and Barack Obama (D-Ill.) have introduced a bill that would create a searchable public database of federal grant and contract recipients. Tracking the flow of taxpayer funds can be a daunting task even for journalists and full-time government watchdogs. Coburn and Obama would make discovering the latest bridge to nowhere or deal for Halliburton as easy as doing a Google search.

But not everyone wants it to be so simple for taxpayers to see where their money is going. Some senator has derailed the proposal through a “secret hold”—preventing a floor vote on the bill while keeping voters in the dark about his identity. It just goes to show

that it is hard to bring accountability to the federal government when the whole system is designed to avoid it.

[CULTURE]

## THE GOP IN THE GAP

In his first major speech as treasury secretary, Henry Paulson said, “It is neither fair nor useful to blame any political party” for increasing income disparity—which means that his own party is worried about its effects. The GOP has traditionally argued that government should step aside and let the free market distribute its favors, equitably if not equally. But lately other forces—globalization and mass immigration chief among them—have conspired to sway the invisible hand.

The *New York Times* reports that we may be entering “the first sustained period of economic growth since World War II that fails to offer a prolonged increase in real wages for most workers.” While productivity rose 16.6 percent from 2000 to 2005, median worker compensation increased only 7.2 percent. Over the same period, corporate profits boomed, reaching their highest share of GDP since the 1960s.

It’s unlikely that these developments will have political ramifications in the immediate future, with foreign policy dominating the fall elections and voters more inclined to fault corrupt CEOs than changes in global trade and migration patterns. But as the income gulf widens, the cultural consequences will become more plain, as James Kurth details in this issue’s cover piece.

The Right is understandably leery of this subject: proposed fixes usually involve dubious redistribution schemes. But when a father can’t support his family on a single salary, traditional values are at stake. And when conservative measures like securing our borders and maintaining our industrial base could reverse the trend, this is an area where the Right should find its voice. ■

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[unsustainable development]

# *The Rich Get Richer*

Growing income disparity doesn't presage a new labor movement at home—but it may signal more terrorism for us abroad.

**By James Kurth**

IN 1914, Henry Ford paid his factory workers \$5 a day, twice the going rate, with the aim of creating a broad middle class able to buy the cars they were building. Today, that project isn't faring so well: *The Economist* reports that in the U.S. "the gap between rich and poor is bigger than in any other advanced country." And it's growing. According to the Congressional Budget Office, from 1979 to 2001, the after-tax income of the top 1 percent of U.S. households soared 139 percent, while the income of the middle fifth rose only 17 percent and the income of the poorest fifth climbed just 9 percent. Last year American CEOs earned 262 times the average wage of their workers—up tenfold from 1970.

This widening gap can be seen virtually everywhere we look—in America; within other countries, even those hitherto distinguished by a high degree of equality (in particular, Japan, South Korea, and China); and between rich and poor countries in the world at large. This pervasive reality has been explored ably and comprehensively in recent books by the popular and learned conservative writer Kevin Phillips. But it has also been recognized by professional analysts at the very heart of the capitalist system: a recent study by Citigroup Global Markets entitled "Plutonomy: Buying Luxury, Explaining Global

Imbalances" suggested investment strategy on the basis of these trends.

Since most of the writing on inequality is done by economists, it is natural that they focus on the fiscal consequences. But in this essay, our focus will be on the ramifications for politics and culture, both within America and within the world more generally.

As Phillips documents, there have been several previous eras in American history that were characterized by growing economic inequality. They include not only the famous (and infamous) Gilded Age of the 1880s but also the 1830s and the 1920s. These previous eras and their eventual end may provide some prototypes for our own. But as we shall see, there are certain unique features of our era of growing inequality that make it something new under the sun.

It would be one thing, and bad enough, if great personal wealth were simply expended on more goods, in order to engage in conspicuous consumption. The consequences for society would include ever greater public displays of materialistic values. But this phenomenon seems to be as old as recorded history, and it is hard for a conservative to get really angry about something that has so much tradition behind it.

It would be another thing, and even worse, if great personal wealth were

simply translated into more great wealth—if capital were invested in capital in order to get even more capital. The consequences for society would include ever greater concentration of market power. But in the United States, this phenomenon has been around for more than a century, and we have dealt with it by permitting more competition, not only by antitrust legislation but also by opening the American economy to similar goods imported from abroad and, even more effectively, to entirely new goods and services that have resulted from technological innovation. It is difficult to get anxious about a problem that has been so readily and so often solved in the past.

A more serious problem results because the rich also like to buy people—personal servants who work in their homes and grounds as maids, cooks, nannies, painters, and gardeners. Nowadays, this largely means Mexican and Central American immigrants—and illegal ones at that. Of course, U.S. agricultural and manufacturing businesses want to hire illegal immigrants, too. However, the really animated core of the political lobby that supports illegal immigration—its mass base, so to speak—is composed of rich homeowners, who desperately want someone to do their dirty work and to do it cheaply. Although they are the largest beneficiar-

ies of the American way of life, including the rule of law, when it comes to the issue of illegal immigration, the rich do everything they can to undermine the American way for the vast majority of other Americans. There is nothing conservative about these actions by the rich; rather, the true conservatives are the less well-off who oppose illegal immigration and who are trying to preserve (and conserve) what was once an established and respected order.

But immigration policy is only one example of the most serious problem with increasing economic inequality: the holders of great wealth—especially if they are organized into a political lobby of similar holders of great wealth—can buy not only more goods, more capital, and more people. They can also buy (through the vehicle of campaign contributions) more important people: politicians and other public officials and therefore public policies.

Some of these bought policies may be for the purpose of making the rich even richer, most obviously the current regressive tax policies of the Bush administration. The wealth of the very rich is never the product of free enterprise and the free market alone but comes by operating within and exploiting a network of government supports, such as licenses, regulations, subsidies, and contracts. It is the product of a sort of giveaway. Consequently, to reduce the taxes on wealth (estate taxes) or on the income from wealth (capital-gains taxes), when that wealth has been acquired with one or another kind of government support, is in effect to give the wealth holder an additional giveaway. Again, there is nothing authentically conservative about this process.

Having even more wealth than they had before, the very rich can thus buy even more government supports and giveaways and acquire even more wealth, enabling them to buy even more

government supports and giveaways. And so on. The result of great wealth buying public policies is a positive feedback loop, or perhaps a vicious cycle, which transfers ever greater wealth and power to the very rich and away from everyone else.

What is to prevent this cycle from going on forever? Historically, there have been two major constraining (or reversing) processes: one derives from macroeconomics, and the other derives from mass politics. Both constraints were once very powerful but neither are really operating today.

If the rich are getting richer, and the poor, if they are not getting poorer in real terms are not seeing their fortunes rise at comparable rates, this would seem to mean that the increasingly opulent consumption by the rich will have as its counterpart the increasingly austere consumption by the poor, and even by the now shrinking middle class. Eventually, the newly poor will not be able to earn enough to maintain their previous levels of consumption. Consequently, some goods produced will not

(which, at that time, had also been called the Great Depression).

Given this simple model and given the recent pattern of growing economic inequality, one would have expected that the American economy would already be in a new Great Depression. What element has been added that has suspended, perhaps only temporarily, the execution of this macroeconomic iron law? The answer, of course, is consumer credit and record levels of consumer debt. Over one billion credit cards are in circulation in the U.S.—four for every man, woman, and child—and with 40 percent of families spending more than they earn, this keeps consumption rising, even as income may be declining.

In addition, some of the American consumption is also financed, albeit in an indirect and complex way, through the credit extended to the U.S. government and to U.S. lending institutions by the producers (or more precisely, by their governments) of many of the very goods that Americans are consuming—those of China, Japan, and South Korea. On the one hand, these foreign creditors

## **FOREIGN CREDITORS HAVE ENABLED THE UNITED STATES TO AVOID ANOTHER GREAT DEPRESSION, AT THE COST OF A GROWING GREAT DEPENDENCE.**

be consumed, thus there will be fewer goods produced, there will be fewer producers or workers, there will be fewer goods consumed, and so on. We have yet another kind of cycle. It is exactly this process that has long been identified (by John Maynard Keynes, among others) as one of the classical explanations of how the growing inequality of the 1920s led to a crisis of under-consumption and overproduction and then to the Great Depression of the 1930s. A similar cycle had occurred earlier, when the growing inequality of the 1880s had issued in the depression of the 1890s

have enabled the United States to avoid another Great Depression. On the other, this has come at the cost of a growing Great Dependence: the proportion of foreign-held debt is half what we owe as a nation and interest alone totals nearly \$100 billion per year. That dependence is more immediate and obvious with respect to the U.S. government than it is for the American consumer. It does mean, however, that our government will have to tax American citizens more in order to finance its debt. With the tax policies of the Bush administration, this will in turn add to the growing inequal-



ity. It also means that the U.S. government may come to be more constrained in confronting the creditor governments on a variety of foreign-policy issues.

It strains credulity to believe that this cycle of increasing credit—be its sources domestic or foreign—can go on forever. When it ends, the old macroeconomic iron law will impose its penalties.

When we turn from economic responses to growing inequality to political ones, we quickly recall a dramatic parade of social—and socialist—movements marching across the historical landscape, from the beginning of the Industrial Revolution to the end of the Cold War. In America, these included the Jacksonian movement of the 1830s; the Populist movement of the 1880s-1890s; and the New Deal, along with a variety of Marxist movements, in the 1930s. Each of these represented a popular, even mass, reaction to growing economic inequality.

In Europe, of course, these social movements were more massive and more radical. They included the Labour Party in Britain in its early decades; Marxist parties in most nations on the Continent; anarchist movements in Southern Europe; and of course a successful Communist revolution in Russia. Each of these also represented a mass reaction to growing inequality. Communist movements and parties also spread to Asia, where they represented not only the class conflict between rich and poor within countries but also the international conflict between rich and poor countries within the world at large, with these Communist movements becoming anti-colonialist and nationalist ones as well (as in China and Indochina). Marxist movements also spread to Latin America, but there the reaction against growing inequality more often took the form of populist ones (the most familiar case being Peronism in Argentina).

Wherever their locale, most of these mass social movements were eventually

able to impose some kind of constraint upon, or even reversal of, the growing inequality within their countries (but not, however, upon the inequality between countries). Sometimes the constraint was imposed by democratic elections and egalitarian legislation as with the American New Deal, the British Labour Party, and the Scandinavian social democratic parties. Sometimes an electoral triumph by socialist parties was followed by a repressive reaction imposed by parties of the Right as in much of Continental Europe during the 1920s-1930s. And on a few occasions, a Communist party succeeded in making a revolution and imposing a reversal of inequality that was ruthless and terrible indeed as in Russia, China, and Indochina.

But of course, this long historical parade of mass social movements effectively came to an end with the end of the Cold War and with the discrediting and collapse of Communism and of much of

In regard to contemporary America, however, there is no evidence of any social movement at all. Has a new element been added to American politics that has suspended, perhaps only temporarily, operation of the social-movement constraint in our own time? Actually, we can identify three such new elements.

First, there has been a change in the nature of the working population, which always constitutes a good part of the poor or increasingly poor within a society. The conditions of the working class, including the conditions conducive to political organization, are one thing in an industrial economy and a very different thing in a post-industrial, or information, economy such as our own. Sociologists have long observed and specified the many reasons it is much more difficult to politically organize workers who perform clerical, technical, or professional tasks in offices than workers who perform industrial or

## THE CONDITIONS CONDUCTIVE TO POLITICAL ORGANIZATION ARE ONE THING IN AN INDUSTRIAL ECONOMY AND A VERY DIFFERENT THING IN A POST-INDUSTRIAL, OR INFORMATION, ECONOMY.

Marxism more generally. With the end of the Marxist version of mass social movements, it is not surprising that the past 15 years have been a period of growing economic inequality that is now almost completely unconstrained.

Given the extensive historical record of equalitarian social movements and the recent pattern of growing economic inequality, however, one might have expected that some such movement would have already arisen. If we look around the world, perhaps we will be able to see it before our very eyes. Indeed, when we eventually turn our attention to particular poor countries or regions, this will be the case.

manufacturing tasks in factories. In any event, there are very few labor unions that are composed of clerical, technical, or professional employees. When we remember that unions of industrial workers were a fundamental and major pillar of the Democratic Party in America, the Labour Party in Britain, and the socialist and Marxist parties in continental Europe, we can see how, by itself, the shift to an information economy has removed the most powerful political constraint on growing economic inequality.

Second, there has also been a change in the economic self-identification of the general population. The way people define themselves is different in a con-



sumer society, with a total focus upon individual self-gratification, than it is in a producer society, with an emphasis on the social consequences and connections of one's work. It is obviously much more difficult to politically organize masses of people if they all think of themselves as individual consumers or as expressive individualists, each freely choosing his own unique (even if vapid and banal) lifestyle, than to organize masses of people who think of themselves as members of working classes or local communities, who share in common most of the important conditions of their lives.

Third, and a variation on the consumer mentality, there has been a change in the non-working or leisure activities—the preoccupations and not just the occupations—of much of the population. For many Americans today, especially those in what was once the working class, there is indeed a kind of mass activity, but it is not mass political or social activism. Rather, it involves spectator entertainment, especially sports. For them, there is no participation in anything involving real interaction with other human beings, be it political parties, labor unions, community associations, fraternal societies, or, if they have become adults, even in participatory team sports themselves. It is the poorer classes, in contrast to the richer ones, that spend most of their free time with spectator entertainment. As more and more people become poor or poorer and lose any reasonable hope of improving their economic status, either by their own economic efforts or by anything like political activism, it is not surprising that they would seek to fill their bleak hours and vent their sullen frustrations with escapist (and violent) entertainment. What would have been seen as juvenile and abnormal preoccupations in the society of half a century or more ago have become normal ones in the society of our own time.

The same three shifts that have essentially demolished the social-movement constraint on growing inequality in America have also gone far toward doing so in other Western countries as well and even in Japan. All of these have now followed America far along the path of becoming information economies, consumer societies, and spectator cultures.

### IT IS MUCH MORE **DIFFICULT TO POLITICALLY ORGANIZE MASSES OF PEOPLE** IF THEY ALL THINK OF THEMSELVES AS **INDIVIDUAL CONSUMERS** OR AS **EXPRESSIVE INDIVIDUALISTS.**

A good illustration is Europeans' perennial obsession with watching soccer games (of course, this is better than actually killing each other by the millions, as they did during the golden age of mass social movements, particularly in the two world wars). Not surprisingly, social movements that seek to limit or reverse growing economic inequality in these countries are weaker now (and the inequalities greater) than they have been any time since World War II.

These three shifts—from an industrial economy to an information one, from a producer society to a consumer one, and from a participatory culture to a spectator one—have come together in an extreme way to politically immobilize the very group that is the poorest in the United States—African-Americans. Relatively well-employed in manufacturing industries, they have little employment in information companies. Consequently, the majority of young African-American males are now found either among the unemployed, within the underground economy, or in prison. They are certainly not found in social movements, including the long-moribund civil-rights movement. This does not prevent them, however, from being totally absorbed with conspicuous con-

sumption and with spectator sports. Ironically, there had been more involvement by young African-American males in social and political activities back in the bad old days of segregation.

Ever since the exhaustion of the civil-rights movement in the 1970s, the way many young African-American males have actually contested growing eco-

nomie inequality has been with crime—mugging, robbing, and raping the rich (and not only the rich but much larger numbers of the middle class and the poor as well, including vast numbers of other African-Americans). Their method is not a social movement but individual initiative or gang activity, and their scale is not wholesale but retail. Still, for a while, all these individual and gang crimes added up to a kind of guerrilla war against American society. It was not surprising—and it was a good thing—the American law-enforcement authorities finally got their act together in the 1990s and at last engaged in what can be seen as a counterinsurgency campaign, one that was somewhat effective in rounding up and putting down many of the insurgents.

What happens when we turn our attention from America and the West to the world at large? Of course, due to the promotion of globalization by successive U.S. governments and by American elites, the United States is now very much in that world—and in its face.

As it happens, globalization adds to the processes producing a widening gap between rich and poor. First, as is well known, in any country that is immersed and enmeshed in globalization, it has

resulted in both winners (those who already have international connections, English-language proficiency, or information-age skills) and losers (those engaged in traditional agricultural, industrial, and cultural occupations). Those who are already rich tend to benefit from globalization, and many of those who are already poor tend to be hurt by it. It is no accident that the era of globalization—which has largely been the era since the end of the Cold War—has also been an era of a widening

inequality within the countries of these regions combined with the increasing economic inequality between these regions and the rest of the world has generated vast reservoirs of resentment toward the globalization process, toward the West, and especially toward that arch-promoter of globalization, the United States. And starting in the early 2000s, that popular resentment has developed into actual resistance movements, which bear some resemblance to the egalitarian movements of earlier eras.

ment. However, the theology (more accurately, ideology) of political Islam is permeated with egalitarian norms and sentiments, and Islamists are often animated by egalitarian resentments and anger as well. Islamists speak frequently about the injustices and exploitation inflicted by the rich upon the poor, and by the rich West upon the poor Muslim world. “Social justice” is a central concept in most Islamist programs. They have their own way of claiming, as the Communists claimed in an earlier era, to speak for “the wretched of the earth.”

**“SOCIAL JUSTICE” IS A CENTRAL CONCEPT IN MOST ISLAMIST PROGRAMS. THEY HAVE THEIR OWN WAY OF CLAIMING TO SPEAK FOR “THE WRETCHED OF THE EARTH.”**

gap between rich and poor. Anyone who claims that globalization is a conservative process is either a liar or a fool.

What has been true within countries has been true between countries as well. Over the past 15 years or so, globalization has generally increased the GNP per capita of the countries that were already rich—the United States, Europe, and Japan—although of course even in these countries there are some sectors and groups that have been hurt by it. More momentously, globalization has also increased the GNP per capita of some countries that were once poor or near-poor, particularly many countries in Asia and including such immense ones as China and India. This is a very impressive result indeed, although again, even in these countries there are very large sectors and groups in the traditional economy that have been hurt by globalization.

However, there are three big regions where a very large majority of the people have lost out from globalization, or are at least convinced that they have: Africa, Latin America, and most consequentially, the Middle East and more generally the Muslim world. The increasing economic

The resistance to globalization has developed least in Africa, which in any case is the least developed—the poorest and the most anarchic—region of the world. In Latin America, however, populist—and anti-globalization and anti-American—movements have surged in the past few years. Radical versions have been voted into power in Venezuela and Bolivia; more moderate versions have been successful in Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay; and populist candidates have come close to electoral victory in Mexico and Peru. In many ways, these contemporary populist movements and leaders are reminiscent of earlier ones in Latin America history. If the United States were not now bogged down in the quagmire of Iraq, the attention of the U.S. government and the American media would be fixated upon what they would perceive as a dangerous populist threat sweeping Latin America.

But the really serious resistance movement to globalization, the West, and the United States has arisen within the Muslim world. This is Islamism, which is also often called political Islam. When we in America consider Islamism, we do not think of it as an egalitarian social move-

However, most of these wretched of the earth—and of globalization—are not likely to be listening when the Islamists speak. There is little evidence that they have any appeal—thus far at least—among any peoples who are not already Muslim. But with the wretched of the Muslim world—and with many of the educated, the middle classes, and the simply aggrieved and frustrated as well—it is a very different story. At least for now, some version of Islamism is more appealing to them than any of the other existing ideological alternatives, including the secular liberal democracy of the West.

Perhaps the most interesting place where the Islamist ideology of social justice will resonate is that part of the Muslim world within the West itself: Western Europe’s communities of Muslim immigrants and their European-born children and descendants. By now several major European countries—Spain, Britain, France, and the Netherlands—have suffered either Islamist terrorist attacks or Muslim youth riots and violence, and there will doubtless be more of this in the future.

Indeed, many Western European countries are becoming two nations. The first is the original, ethnic-European nation; it is now largely secular or even pagan, rich, and aging. And because of its extraordinarily low birth rates, it is

shrinking in numbers. The second is the immigrant, non-European nation, the Muslim nation or *umma*; it is substantially religious or even Islamist, poor, and young. And because of its high birth rate, it will continue to grow in numbers.

The two nations are coming to view each other with mutual contempt, but in the new Muslim nation there is a growing rage, and in the old, ethnic-European nation there is a growing fear. This will provide the perfect conditions for a widespread Islamist sense of social injustice, a deep Islamist hatred of what are perceived as rich Europeans, and as a natural consequence, an endemic threat of Islamist violence.

Of course, contemporary Islamist movements are not organized in quite the same way as earlier Communist movements (although the governing Islamist party in Turkey today is rather similar to the Socialist parties in continental Europe in the first half of the 20th century). Indeed, there is increasing evidence that Islamist movements take the form of loosely co-ordinated, transnational networks rather than tightly disciplined international organizations as was the case with the Communist parties. This difference has much to do with, as we have discussed before, the shift from an industrial economy to an information one, along with the related shift from a national economy to a global one. In an industrial and national economy, everything important took the form of a hierarchical organization. In an information and global economy, conversely, almost everything important is more like a horizontal network.

In addition, contemporary Islamist movements do not employ political violence in quite the same way as earlier Communist movements. In particular, most Islamist acts of violence are directed at ordinary civilians—and at large numbers of them at that. They are meant to terrorize civilians and there-

fore are terrorism in the literal sense. In contrast, most acts of violence by Communist movements were directed at the civilian officials or the security and military personnel of the regime the Communists sought to overthrow, as in the Communist insurgencies or guerrilla wars in China, Indochina, Malaya, and Central America. The historical counterpart to Islamist terrorism is not so much Communist insurgents but anarchist bombers. This feature may also have something to do with the shift from hierarchical organizations (as with the Communists) to more horizontal networks (as with both the anarchists and the Islamists).

Moreover, Islamists frequently engage in suicide-terrorism, whereas this was virtually unknown among Communists when they inflicted their violence. It was also rare among anarchist terrorists.

And finally, of course, Islamist terrorists may soon acquire weapons of mass destruction, something that only states have possessed up to now. States, being established, hierarchical institutions, have not really wanted to put their WMD

And so, what will be the eventual fate of the current drive toward greater economic inequality, in America and around the world? Within America and the other rich countries (or rather, the countries with a lot of rich), there do not now seem to be any internal forces that will arrest this drive. As for external forces, only Islamism is now beginning to mount a serious threat to the security of the rich, and that threat is also directed at all the other groups and peoples that the Islamists despise as well. Still, whoever might be the specific target of a particular Islamist attack with a weapon of truly mass destruction, it will take a lot of the rich along with it. Furthermore, by exploding established expectations about the future of economic and financial assets, and therefore by reducing the value of those assets, it will take a lot of their wealth too.

In the course of the 20th century, there were several eras of growing economic inequality. On a few occasions, they came to an end in a relatively gentle way, with democratic elections and more egalitarian legislation. More

## WHEN THE RICH WENT OUT, IT SEEMS, THEY NORMALLY DID SO WITH A BANG, AND NOT WITH A WHIMPER.

at the service of egalitarian projects. With Islamist transnational networks, however, there is no obvious reason why they would not be willing, even eager, to use WMD to bring the rich and the powerful, and rich and powerful states, crashing down. Although Islamist terrorist networks are not really very good examples of mass social movements, they will be very good at achieving mass social destruction. And, brimming over with egalitarian envy and self-righteous wrath, they will delight in doing so.

often, however, they were ended by a catastrophe, such as the Great Depression, a violent social revolution, or a world war. When the rich went out, it seems, they normally did so with a bang, and not with a whimper. The way things are now going, it is likely to be so in the future. ■

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# Nation or Notion?

America rose from kin and culture, not an abstract proposition.

By Patrick J. Buchanan

IN AN ADDRESS to the Young Men's Lyceum in Springfield, Illinois on Jan. 27, 1838, a 28-year-old lawyer spoke on "the Perpetuation of Our Political Institutions." Abe Lincoln asked and answered a rhetorical question:

At what point then is the approach of danger to be expected? I answer, if it ever reach us, it must spring up amongst us. It cannot come from abroad. If destruction be our lot, we must ourselves be its author and finisher. As a nation of freemen, we must live through all time, or die by suicide.

Lincoln saw ahead a quarter of a century—to civil war.

The question that must be asked a century and a half after Lincoln's death is the one that troubled his generation. Are we on the path to national suicide?

The America of yesterday has vanished, and the America of tomorrow holds promise of becoming a land our parents would not recognize. Considering the epochal changes that have taken place in our country, the political and economic powers working toward an end to national sovereignty and independence, it is impossible to be sanguine about the permanence of the nation.

In Catholic doctrine, death occurs when the soul departs the body, after which the body begins to decompose. So it is with nations.

Patriotism is the soul of a nation. When it dies, when a nation loses the love and loyalty of its people, the nation dies and begins to decompose.

Patriotism is not nation-worship, such as we saw in Europe in the 1930s. It is not that spirit of nationalism that must denigrate or dominate other nations. It is a passionate attachment to one's own country—its land, its people, its past, its heroes, literature, language, traditions, culture, and customs. "Intellectuals tend to forget," wrote Régis Debray, "that nations hibernate, but empires grow old. The American nation will outlast the Atlantic Empire as the Russian nation will outlast the Soviet Empire."

A century ago, the French historian and philosopher Ernest Renan described a nation:

A nation is a living soul, a spiritual principle. Two things, which in truth are but one, constitute this soul, this spiritual principle. One is in the past, the other in the present. One is the common possession of a rich heritage of memories; the other is the actual consent, the desire to live together, the will to preserve worthily the undivided inheritance which has been handed down ... The nation, like the individual, is the outcome of a long past of efforts, and sacrifices, and devotions ... To have common glories in the past, a common will in the present; to have done great things together, to will to do the like again—such are the essential conditions of the making of a people.

This community called a nation is much more than a "division of labor" or a "market." Added Renan:

Community of interests is assuredly a powerful bond between men. But ... can interests suffice to make a nation? I do not believe it. Community of interests makes commercial treaties. There is a sentimental side to nationality; it is at once body and soul; a *Zollverein* is not a fatherland.

An economic union like the European Union is not a nation. An economy is not a country. An economic system should strengthen the bonds of national union, but the nation is of a higher order than the construct of any economist. A nation is organic; a nation is alive. A constitution does not create a nation. A nation writes a constitution that is the birth certificate of the nation already born in the hearts of its people.

"Nation"—as suggested by its Latin root *nascere*, to be born—intrinsically implies a link by blood," wrote Peter Brimelow in *National Review* in 1992. "A nation in a real sense is an extended family. The merging process through which all nations pass is not merely cultural, but to a considerable extent biological through intermarriage."

Brimelow describes a nation as an "ethno-cultural community—an interlacing of ethnicity and culture," that "speaks one language." He cites the late senator from New York:

In his recent book *Pandaemonium*, Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan even used this rigorous definition, in an effort to capture both culture and ethnicity: a nation

is a group of people who *believe* they are ancestrally related. It is the largest grouping that shares that belief. (Moynihan's italics)

To be a nation, a people must *believe* they are a nation and that they share a common ancestry, history, and destiny. Whatever ethnic group to which we may belong, we Americans must see ourselves as of a unique and common nationality—in order to remain a nation.

There is a rival view, advanced by neoconservatives and liberals, that America is a different kind of nation, not held together by the bonds of history and memory, tradition and custom, language and literature, birth and faith, blood and soil. Rather, America is a creedal nation, united by a common commitment to a set of ideas and ideals.

"Americans of all national origins, classes, religions, creeds and colors, have something in common... a political creed," wrote Gunnar Myrdal in 1944. During the battle over Proposition 187 in 1994, when 59 percent of the California electorate voted to cut off welfare to illegal aliens, Jack Kemp and Bill Bennett accepted Myrdal's idea, declaring, "The American national identity is based on a creed, on a set of principles and ideas."

Irving Kristol embraced the Bennett-Kemp view when he compared the United States to the former USSR: "[L]arge nations, whose identity is ideological, like the Soviet Union of yesterday and the United States of today, have ideological interests in addition to more material concerns."

FDR seemed to agree, asserting, "Americanism is a matter of the mind and heart. Americanism is not, and never was, a matter of race and ancestry. A good American is one who is loyal to this country and to our creed of liberty and democracy." To be one nation, said Bill Clinton, all we need to do is define ourselves by "our primary allegiance to

the values America stands for and values we really live by."

In his first inaugural address, George W. Bush endorsed the creedal-nation concept: "America has never been united by blood or birth or soil. We are bound by ideals that move us beyond our backgrounds, lift us above our interests, and teach us what it means to be citizens."

To this idea of America as a creedal nation bound together not "by blood or birth or soil" but by "ideals," there is a corollary that has driven immigration policy for 40 years—that people of any culture or continent can be assimilated with equal ease, depending only upon whether they assent to the tenets of our creed.

Demonstrably, this is false. Human beings are not blank slates. Nor can they be easily separated from the abiding attachments of the tribe, race, nation, culture, community whence they came. Any man or woman, of any color or creed, can be a good American. But when it comes to the ability to assimilate into the United States, all nationalities, creeds, and cultures are not equal.

"During my life, I have seen Frenchmen, Italians, Russians, and so on," wrote Joseph de Maistre, "but I must say, as for man, I have never come across him anywhere; if he exists, he is completely unknown to me." Maistre's point, notes Sam Francis, "was that 'tribal behavior' is what makes human beings human. Take it away from 'man' or 'humankind' and what you get is not 'pure man' or 'liberated man' but dehumanization..."

Americans are an identifiable people. When traveling abroad, they are recognizable by their speech and manners, not because they have been interrogated on their beliefs in democracy and free markets.

In the most famous depiction of Americans as a new, unique, and separate people, John Jay wrote in *Federalist* No. 2:

Providence has been pleased to give this one connected country to one united people—a people descended from the same ancestors, speaking the same language, professing the same religion, attached to the same principles of government, very similar in their manners and customs, and who, by their joint counsels, arms, and efforts, fighting side by side throughout a long and bloody war, have nobly established their general liberty and independence.

"This country and this people seem to have been made for each other," Jay continues, calling his countrymen "a band of brethren." Thus, before the Constitution was ratified, John Jay considered Americans "one united people," "one connected country," and "brethren," of common blood. What holds this "one united people" together? Says Jay: language, faith, culture, and memory.

Each nation's culture, be it that of France, England, or America, gives the nation its particular character. Tom Fleming, editor of *Chronicles*, notes:

Culture... means the cultivation of a certain kind of character. Cultural institutions... are the agents that make us who and what we are. Like Tennyson's Ulysses, you and I can say, 'I am part of all that I have met': the books we read, the music we listen to, the pictures we look at, the prayers we say. A culture is the sum of all these things and many more, including table manners and styles of dress. As an American poet put it, 'The way you wear your hat, the way you drink your tea ...'

To traditional conservatives, this "creedal nation" exists in the minds of men of words. It is an intellectual construct, to which men can render neither love nor loyalty. For two centuries, men

have died for America. Who would lay down his life for the UN, the EU, or a “North American Union”?

When Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, college students stood beside sharecroppers’ sons to enlist. These men were not volunteering to defend abstract ideas. For democracy was not attacked. Equality was not attacked. America was attacked. Many had likely never read Jefferson, Hamilton, or Madison, and some would die never having read them. They were patriots united by nationality. They were Americans, and they fought, bled, and died as Americans, no matter what they believed.

Every true nation is the creation of a unique people. Indeed, if America is an ideological nation grounded no deeper than the sandy soil of abstract ideas, she will not survive the storms of this century any more than the Soviet Union survived the last. When the regime, party, army, and police that held that ideological nation together lost the will to keep it together, the USSR broke down along the fault lines of nationality, faith, and culture. True nations, held together not by any political creed but by patriotism, emerged from the rubble.

In the great crisis of his empire, Hitler’s invasion, Stalin did not call on his subjects to save communism. He called on Russia’s sons to defend Mother Russia against the Germanic hordes. Communist to the core, Stalin yet knew that men do not die for secular creeds like Marxism and Leninism, but for the “ashes of their fathers and the temples of their gods.”

France considers herself a creedal nation, whose unifying beliefs date to the Enlightenment and Revolution. But when the Revolution tore France to pieces, what held her together through the Napoleonic wars, Sedan, and loss of Alsace, and Verdun, as she divided over ideology and faith, was nationality and culture. Whether monarchical, republi-

can, imperial, or democratic, the French nation and people endure. And if the French cease to be the dominant tribe, adherence to Enlightenment ideas will not save France.

Should America lose her ethnic-cultural core and become a nation of nations, America will not survive. For nowhere on this earth can one find a multicultural, multiethnic, multilingual nation that is not at risk. Democracy is not enough. Equality is not enough. Free markets are not enough to hold a people together.

“Nationalism remains, after two centuries, the most vital political emotion in the world,” concedes Arthur Schlesinger, “far more vital than social ideologies such as communism or fascism or even democracy.” And inside the nation, “nationalism takes the form of ethnicity and tribalism.”

As Samuel Huntington has written:

America is a founded society created by seventeenth- and eighteenth-century settlers, almost all of whom came from the British Isles ... They initially defined America in terms of race, ethnicity, culture, and most importantly religion. Then in the eighteenth century they also had to define America ideologically to justify their independence from their home-countrymen.

The ideology was created by colonial elites to justify the breaking of blood ties with their British brethren. But before the ideology came the country.

George Washington had once sought to become an officer in the British army. But by the end of the French and Indian War, he had begun to see the British not as kinsmen but as overlords. In heart and soul, well before the Second Continental Congress, Washington was an American.

After the Boston Tea Party in 1773, Patrick Henry declared, “The distinc-

tions between Virginians, Pennsylvanians, and New Yorkers and New Englanders are no more. I am not a Virginian, but an *American*.” That was two years before Jefferson wrote the first draft of the Declaration of Independence.

The Declaration stated what was already known: the Americans had become a people. In his first draft, Jefferson had written of “our British brethren,” who have failed to honor “the ties of our common kindred” and proven themselves “deaf to the voice of... consanguinity.” These are matters of blood and kinship. The Native Americans shared our continent but were not our kinsmen. To Jefferson and the signers of ’76, they were those “merciless Indian Savages, whose known rule of warfare, is an undistinguished destruction, of all Ages, Sexes & Conditions.”

“What then is the American, this new man?” was the famous question of the French émigré Henri St. John de Crèvecoeur. To which he gave his classic answer:

He is an American, who leaving behind all his ancient prejudices and manners, receives new ones from the new mode of life he has embraced, the new government he obeys, and the new rank he holds. The American is a new man, who acts upon new principles ... Here individuals of all nations are melted into a new race of men.

To preserve this “new race of men,” Washington, in a 1792 letter to John Adams, urged that immigrants be spread out among the people.

[T]he policy ... of [immigration] taking place in a body (I mean settling them in a body) may be much questioned; for, by so doing, they retain the language, habits and principles (good or bad) which they bring with them. Whereas by an



intermixture with our people, they or their descendants get assimilated to our customs and laws: in a word soon become one people.

The Father of our country believed that before they could become Americans, immigrants must embrace our language and customs as well as our principles.

For Hamilton, America's success depended on the "preservation of a national spirit and national character" that immigrants must come to share with our native-born. The safety of the republic rested on "love of country" and the "exemption of citizens from foreign bias and prejudice." Assimilation, he wrote, would enable "aliens to get rid of foreign and acquire American attachment..."

John Quincy Adams set down the conditions for newcomers: "They must cast off the European skin, never to resume it. They must look forward to their posterity rather than backward to their ancestors..."

Theodore Roosevelt echoed Adams's conviction. He thundered again and again against "hyphenated-Americanism." "Either a man is an American and nothing else, or he is not an American at all," said T.R.

This is the traditionalist view: that Americans are a people apart from all others, with far more in common than political beliefs. It is this America that is imperiled by the mass migration of millions from countries whose peoples have never before been assimilated. And if the organic America of the traditionalists dies, the "creedal nation" of Kemp, Kristol, Bennett, and Bush will not survive.

By Jay's definition, can anyone say today that we are "one united people"? We are no longer descended from the same ancestors. The European core—almost 90 percent of all Americans as late as 1965—has fallen well below 70 percent and will be less than half the nation by 2050.

We no longer speak the same language, nor do we insist that immigrants learn English. Of the 9 million living in Los Angeles County, 5 million do not speak English at home. Schoolchildren in Chicago are taught in 100 languages. The fastest growing radio and TV stations in America broadcast in Spanish.

Nor do Americans any longer profess the same faith. We are no longer *Protestant, Catholic, and Jew*, as sociologist Will Herberg described us in 1955. We are Protestant, Catholic, Jew, Orthodox, Mormon, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Taoist, Shintoist, Santeria, New Age, voodoo, agnostic, atheist, humanist, Rastafarian, and Wiccan.

We never fought "side by side throughout a long and bloody war." The Greatest Generation is passing on, and if the rest of us recall "a long and bloody war," it was Korea, Vietnam, or Iraq, and not for long did we remain "side by side." For a time the Cold War united us. But that, too, is over.

We are yet "attached to the same principles of government." But this is not enough to hold a nation together. The South was attached to the same principles of government. But that did not prevent it from fighting four bloody years. If Robert E. Lee could ride across the Long Bridge to Virginia to take up arms against the United States, is it not naïve to believe that scores of millions of aliens without roots here will put America ahead of the homelands they left behind?

Nor do Americans treasure history or revere heroes as we once did. What many still see as a glorious past, others see as shameful history. To many, the discovery of America by the explorers and the winning of the West are no longer seen as heroic events but as matters of which Western man should be ashamed.

Huntington writes, "To reject the central ideas of that doctrine [our political creed] is to be un-American." Two of the

central ideas of Huntington's political creed are democracy and equality. How do the Founding Fathers measure up?

Jefferson was a slaveholder who wrote of an "aristocracy of virtue and talent, which nature has wisely provided for the direction of the interests of society..." Madison, the author of the Constitution, headed the American Colonization Society, "in the belief that its plan to return slaves to Africa represented the most sensible way out of that long-festered crisis." After Madison's death, leadership passed to Henry Clay, who was eulogized in 1852 by Lincoln.

The unequal treatment of our fellow Americans of African descent for a century after Appomattox was a grave injustice and historic wrong. Nonetheless, we cannot deny that the greatest of our forefathers approved these things. If a belief in equality is the *sine qua non* of being an American, then the authors of the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Gettysburg Address do not qualify.

What of a belief in democracy being an indispensable part of the "American Creed"? "Democracy... wastes, exhausts, and murders itself. There is never a democracy that did not commit suicide," wrote Adams. "A democracy [is] the only pure republic, but impracticable beyond the limits of a town," added Jefferson. Madison was more negative. Writing in *Federalist* No. 10, he declared, "democracies have ever been spectacles of turbulence and contention: have ever been incompatible with personal security or the rights of property; and have in general been as short in their lives as they have been violent in their deaths." Said Hamilton: "The ancient democracies, in which the people themselves deliberated, never possessed one feature of good government. Their very nature was tyranny."

If a commitment to democracy is an indispensable element of the American Creed that unites the nation, the Found-

ing Fathers seem not to qualify as 100 percent American.

Whether America is a nation like all others or a different kind of nation is more than an academic question. For who wins the argument determines America's destiny. As Huntington points out, "National interest derives from national identity. We have to know who we are before we can know what our interests are."

The scheme to redefine America's identity as other than what America has always been is a historic fraud, concocted by ideologues to divert the nation away from a traditional foreign policy into crusades to remake the world in a democratist mould.

Inventing a new past for America as a creedal nation—the kind of nation our forefathers would have rebelled against—neoconservatives hope to control a future they see as fulfilling America's mission: to democratize mankind. Americans are being indoctrinated in a fabricated creed that teaches they are being untrue to themselves and faithless to their fathers unless they go abroad in search of monsters to destroy.

Whether America is a traditional nation or an ideological nation is also critical to the immigration debate. For if America is a "propositional nation," then who comes and whence they come does not matter. Indeed, the more who come and assent to the American "proposition," the stronger and better nation we become. That way lies the remaking of America into the first universal nation of Ben Wat-tenberg's dream and Teddy Roosevelt's nightmare, when he warned against our becoming a "tangle of squabbling minorities" and no longer a nation at all.

Before Americans ever adopted a creed, Americans were a people and America was a nation. Those who equate the creed with the nation rewrite that history to convert America into something she never was: an imperial

democracy imposing her ideology on a resisting world, to the ruin of the Republic she was meant to be. And they will turn America into something she cannot survive becoming: a multi-cultural, multiethnic, multilingual Tower of Babel.

If we are a creedal nation, united by a commitment to democracy, equality, and liberty, with a mandate and mission to impose those ideas and ideals on mankind, we shall have a foreign policy like that of George W. Bush. But if we are a traditional nation, our national interests will be traditional: the defense of our land and the preservation of the lives and liberty of our people.

Language, faith, culture, and history—and, yes, birth, blood, and soil—produce a people, not an ideology. After the ideologies and creeds that seized Germany,

Italy, and Russia by the throat in the 20th century were all expunged, Germans remained German, Italians remained Italian, and Russians remained Russian. After three decades of Maoist madness, the Chinese remain Chinese.

"Historically," Huntington writes, "American identity has had two primary components: culture and creed ... If multiculturalism prevails and if the consensus on liberal democracy disintegrates, the United States could join the Soviet Union on the ash heap of history."

Democracy is not enough. If the culture dies, the country dies. ■

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## De-Education Campaign

A radical playwright misremembers the meritocratic schools that made Britain great.

**By Peter Hitchens**

IF THERE ARE ANY serious historians left by the time this history-hating era comes to an end, they will have much to say about our civilization's determined attack on education and knowledge. It may well be that, as they survey the ruins of Western civilization, they will conclude that it was in the schoolroom, not on the battlefield or in the courts, or in the councils of politics, that the decisive struggles took place. There discipline was abandoned and authority dismantled; there Christianity was first robbed of its supremacy and then treated as a dead faith to be examined

coldly, as if on a slab, rather than to be believed; there the new hedonist anti-marriage morality was taught; there the idea of a hierarchy of authors and poets was dissolved; there poetry was abandoned; there national and patriotic myths were dethroned and replaced by globalism and generalized optimistic idealism; there egalitarianism survived, persisted and eventually emerged victorious, just as politicians and diplomats were congratulating themselves that they had defeated the great egalitarian powers and persuaded them to abandon their ideology.

Yet this colossal battle has been too little noted, either in journalism, literature, or in history. Some authors, some academics, some journalists, have attempted to warn of the scale of the danger. They find their audience small and fickle. Most of us care about schools only when we or our children are attending them. Our understanding of what goes on in them is often hopelessly outdated.

But perhaps the most distressing feature of this cultural catastrophe has been the complaisant silence of the intellectual Left, all of whose members surely know the importance of rigorous education as a pillar of civilization and many of whom owe their own eminence and comfort to it. I will return to some aspects of this later, but this seems to me to be well illustrated by the successful play "The History Boys," which recently won an extraordinary array of Tony awards for its performance on Broadway and is now being made into a movie.

The play is the work of Alan Bennett, also the author of "The Madness of King George" and a revered British cultural figure. It is not a very good piece of work, by Bennett's standards or by any standards. It is full of four-letter words that could easily have been avoided, and its narrative is both crude and bizarre. It also contains slabs of unlikely sexual eccentricity, a preoccupation of Bennett's that must have left many in the Broadway audiences wondering what on earth they had come to see. But Bennett is held in such regard that his works are always directed by the best available person and acted by shining talents who could make an insurance policy sing and dance. Perhaps that is why nobody shouts "rubbish" from the stalls.

The play has a ridiculous plot about an eccentric but inspiring schoolmaster who sexually molests his young charges while taking them for rides on his

motorcycle, an act almost certainly physically impracticable. It seeks to endear itself to the cultural mainstream through some fairly crude agitprop. The hero's position is threatened by the arrival of another teacher, an unscrupulous sort who later ends up as a spokesman for an illiberal government, an unlikely career switch, even in these

against a cruel and often stupid class system, not a Marxist uprising but a wise and compassionate piece of social reform. In 1944, the wartime coalition government agreed that from then on it would provide free, excellent secondary education to any child who could pass an examination at the age of 11. The reform did not create a meritocratic par-

## **MOST OF US CARE ABOUT SCHOOLS ONLY WHEN WE OR OUR CHILDREN ARE ATTENDING THEM. OUR UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT GOES ON IN THEM IS OFTEN HOPELESSLY OUTDATED.**

days of blurred boundaries between the professions. Its targets are government lying (who could be in favor of that?) and perhaps the school of historians who make reputations and fortunes by taking deliberately contrary views. The astonishing thing is that Bennett sets his play in a school (for the second time in his career) but manages to miss a far more important target—the debauchery of education by the radical cause he affects to support. In his role as British National Treasure and cuddly radical, he recently took part in protests against the Iraq War and often makes grumpy remarks about the Blair government's lack of principle.

Yet there is a greater cause he neglects. He, especially, ought to care about what has happened to our schools. Alan Bennett is the son of a butcher from the workaday Northern English city of Leeds. He grew up in the complex shallows of the British lower middle class, a few crucial social inches above the industrial workers, desperately genteel and respectable but not rich or privileged in any way. Like many other children of this class, he was the beneficiary of one of the most astonishing and admirable social revolutions ever to take place in Britain. It was a revolution

adise, but it did an enormous amount of undoubted good. Middle-class children, with parents sympathetic to education but unable to afford the fees of the great private schools, certainly benefited greatly. But so did thousands from much poorer backgrounds, who would otherwise have had little or no chance of expanded horizons or college entrance.

The schools involved are known in England as grammar schools, for unimportant historical reasons. Such schools were (hardly any still exist) largely modeled on the great public schools (actually private) such as Eton and Winchester. Some of them were ancient foundations in their own right that had charged modest fees to middle class families in established towns and cities for centuries. Their buildings were architecturally conservative, often tending to the gothic, the Tudor, or the neo-classical, so reinforcing their intention of supporting order and tradition. They were hierarchical, solemn, old-fashioned, and rigorous. A boy or girl educated in such a school would, by the age of 18, be two or three years ahead of a boy or girl educated in an American high school of the same period, firmly grounded in Latin and history as well as in English literature and usually French,



or alternatively in the sciences. The U.S. for many years benefited from these well-educated thousands, drawing them across the Atlantic with high salaries in a phenomenon known in Britain as the brain drain.

Not all the brains drained. Look through the biographies of members of the British Parliament, and you will find that an astonishing proportion of them attended such schools. Thousands of less prominent but equally important men and women in the professions—in industry, journalism, letters, commerce, and the armed services—did so as well. The less class-ridden Britain that began to take shape in the 1960s was the result.

IN RESPONSE TO THE JIBE THAT HIS **STANDARDS ARE OUT-OF-DATE**, HE RETORTS, **"STANDARDS ARE OUT OF DATE. THAT IS WHAT MAKES THEM STANDARDS."**

The previous domination of the private schools was menaced. Those born, like Alan Bennett, in the mid-1930s were followed into the grammar schools by much of the baby-boom generation (or "the bulge" as we in Britain used to call this group, in our vulgar way). Bennett does not seem much to have enjoyed his school, Leeds Modern, but it helped him win a scholarship to a Cambridge college. Now a boy from such a home as his would have no hope of such a chance. A boy of his brilliance would be lost in the howling wilderness of ignorance, chaos, and illiteracy that is the general state of education for the contemporary British poor.

How did this extraordinary change for the worse happen? Why was one of the very few successful social experiments in history abandoned? Britain's two major political parties agreed in the mid-1960s that the grammar schools were unfair to those who failed to get into them and adopted a system loosely modeled on American high schools, which

swiftly brought about a collapse of educational standards and discipline—and a sharp growth in private education among those who could afford it. Social mobility went into reverse. Ivy League universities, which had been stormed by grammar school pupils, once again became the privilege of the wealthy. Leeds Modern's stately neoclassical buildings were first converted into a "comprehensive" high school, merged with the girls' grammar that had stood alongside it and then demolished as part of innumerable reorganizations typical of British state education.

Bennett, who poses as a grumpy radical, does not even seem to know this has

happened, although he has noticed that his old school has been torn down. He grizzles in the introduction to the play that "the proper way forward would be for state education to reach such a standard that private education would be under-subscribed, but there's fat chance of that," apparently unaware that this was pretty much what happened after 1944 but was stopped by the sort of politicians he seems to like.

His play is set in the 1980s, by which time the kind of teaching he portrays would only have been available at a traditional private school with fees (at 2006 rates) of around \$30,000 a year. The boys in the drama speak fluent, grammatical French and display an easy familiarity with English literature and poetry unimaginable in an ordinary comprehensive high school. Bennett seems to have only the vaguest idea of what is now involved in gaining entrance to Oxford or Cambridge, though this is the subject he claims to be writing about. He says he "does not understand" why all British

college students cannot now receive the maintenance grants they used to, though the answer—that egalitarians have vastly increased the number of college students and it is too expensive—is obvious.

Long ago, in 1968, the same Alan Bennett produced a work of genius called "Forty Years On," also set in a school but free of four-letter words. It was elegiac and paradoxical, radical but full of regrets about the cost of change, camouflaged as humor but—it has always seemed to me—a coded expression of Bennett's civilized, private doubts about the side he has somehow chosen. He might turn to it now, as might admirers of his newer work, and look especially at the headmaster's final complaint, soon after he has uttered one of the cleverest lines anyone has written in a century, as witty as Oscar Wilde, and truer than almost anything the overrated Wilde ever said. In response to the jibe that his standards are out-of-date, he retorts, "Standards are out of date. That is what makes them standards." Then he turns to the radical who is about to take over from him and complains, "You've undone quite enough as it is. All these years ... years which have seen the decline of authority, the decay of standards, the slow collapse of all I hold most dear. And now this. Mark my words, when a society has to resort to the lavatory for its humor, the writing is on the wall."

Well, quite. This treason—of the educated against education—has now so rotted and sapped the ribs and limbs of civilization that even the clever and literate feel obliged to pander to the swearing and the smut of the dirty, dangerous street. And still they will not see what they have done—or try to repair it. ■

*Peter Hitchens is a columnist for the London Mail on Sunday. He is the author of The Abolition of Britain.*

# Purpose Driven Right

A new generation of evangelicals looks beyond abortion and homosexuality.

By W. James Antle III

BEFORE THE LAST presidential election, members of Woodland Hills Church bombarded their pastor with requests to distribute pro-Republican voter guides and introduce conservative politicians from the pulpit. Instead, the Rev. Gregory Boyd launched into a series of six sermons titled “The Cross and the Sword” denouncing the “nationalistic and political idolatry” of the Christian Right. The fervor shocked the suburban St. Paul megachurch’s conservative congregation and eventually landed Boyd on the front page of the *New York Times*.

There has been no shortage of books denouncing evangelicals’ increasingly prominent role in the Republican Party and the conservative movement. Andrew Sullivan laments the rise of “Christianists”—a term some see as an attempt to compare religious conservatism to radical Islam—while former *First Things* editor Damon Linker has warned that “theocons” have “secular America under siege.” But some of the recent criticism has come from evangelicals themselves.

In May, Boyd published *The Myth of a Christian Nation: How the Quest for Political Power is Destroying the Church*. He was followed by Randall Balmer, a Barnard College religion professor and self-described “passionate evangelical,” who wrote *Thy Kingdom Come: How the Religious Right Distorts the Faith and Threatens America*. While secularist critics of the Christian Right fear their religious rhetoric portends theocracy, these evangelicals

worry their co-religionists are compromising their faith by connecting the Gospel too closely to a secular political agenda.

Among theologically conservative Protestants, Boyd and Balmer remain political outliers. In 2004, 78 percent of white evangelicals voted to re-elect President Bush. At 72 percent, they were only slightly less supportive of Republican congressional candidates. While the GOP’s fortunes have declined nationally, a May Pew Research Forum poll found that the number of evangelicals identifying as Republicans has actually increased during 2006.

Indeed, Boyd’s pre-election attack on the Religious Right was poorly received by some members of his own congregation. One-fifth of Woodland Hills’ 5,000 members left the church. A fundraising drive conducted at the time of the controversial sermons fell \$3 million short of its goal, forcing staff reductions.

While most evangelicals aren’t ready to abandon the Republican Party, many are open to a conversation about what Christian political involvement should look like. A changing of the guard is apparent. The most prominent leaders of the Religious Right—Pat Robertson, Jerry Falwell, and James Dobson—are senior citizens. With the exception of Dobson, their influence appears to be on the wane even among fellow Christian conservatives. Ralph Reed, once considered a successor, suffered a setback when his role in the Jack Abramoff scandal cost him his party’s nomination for lieutenant governor in Georgia.

A new generation of evangelical leadership—Rick Warren, T.D. Jakes, and Joel Osteen—is less overtly political and interested in issues not usually associated with conservative activism. While still opposed to abortion and same-sex marriage, these ministers are far more likely to speak out about AIDS, poverty, and environmental protection.

Warren has set up three foundations to distribute 90 percent of the proceeds from his bestseller *The Purpose Driven Life*. The focus areas include alleviating poverty and treating AIDS victims in developing countries; none of the foundations are involved in lobbying for confirming the president’s judicial nominees or promoting conservative political causes. In June, he brought together such prominent evangelicals as Billy Graham to participate in an open letter to Bush about poverty. Warren wrote, “I deeply believe that if we as evangelicals remain silent and do not speak up in defense of the poor, we lose our credibility and our right to witness about God’s love for the world.”

In October 2004, the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) adopted an agenda that included the usual social issues—prayer, the right to life, preserving traditional marriage—and fighting global warming. The move elicited criticism from some religious conservatives, most notably James Dobson, who argued that the global-warming stance would divert finite resources and separate evangelicals from important political allies in the culture war. As Tom Minnery, vice president for public policy at Dobson’s

Focus on the Family, puts it, "When thousands of unborn children are dying every day, global warming comes in a very distant second as a priority issue."

Others questioned the NAE's assumption that global warming is caused by human behavior and easily corrected by public policy. "I think 75 to 80 percent of evangelicals would disagree that America causes global warming," says American Family Association President Tim Wildmon. But key NAE leaders aren't backing down. Speaking at an interfaith meeting in New York, the group's vice president for government affairs, Richard Cizik, spoke of "isolationist" evangelicals who fail to "extend support of the community to addressing poverty and the environment."

Yet some traditional religious conservatives are getting on board. Robertson recently declared himself "a convert" on global warming. The political organization he founded in 1989, the Christian Coalition of America, has also begun looking into environmental issues. "We are going to have a new mission, a new vision—much more broad-focused," Christian Coalition President Roberta Coombs told the Associated Press. But she acknowledged some supporters "don't like comments I've made about the environment and some of these other issues."

Coombs was alluding to three state chapters of her organization that withdrew in part because of her decision to branch out into nontraditional policy areas. "We now have a conservative president, conservative Congress, and conservative judges," contends Christian Coalition spokeswoman Michelle Coombs. "Of course we believe in the core social issues, but Christians need to broaden their focus."

Despite the infamous *Washington Post* line that evangelicals are "easy to command," the Religious Right's grassroots supporters might not be listening.

While the evangelical vote has grown in size and relative importance, many of the political groups dedicated to organizing it have declined. The Christian Coalition, for example, has assumed a lower profile and is reportedly \$1 million in debt.

Evangelical Protestants haven't always been on the Right. Balmer notes that evangelicals played a large role in both the crusade to abolish slavery and the women's suffrage movement, which he labels progressive causes. In the middle of the 20th century, after the Scopes trial and the failure of Prohibition, many evangelicals largely withdrew from the political sphere. Their leaders became less inclined to preach about politics. Billy Graham met with presidents but was bipartisan and usually circumspect about policy. He was a staunch anti-communist and, after a long period of neutrality, became cautiously supportive of the civil-rights movement in the mid-1960s. But Graham was not publicly identified as a political crusader.

## A VOCAL MINORITY HAS PERSISTED IN ARGUING THAT THE **GOP**, AS THE PARTY OF THE RICH, ISN'T THE BEST VEHICLE FOR A CHRISTIAN POLITICAL WITNESS.

Over the course of the 1960s, perceived secularist encroachments—Supreme Court rulings against prayer and Bible instruction in public schools, changes in sexual mores—produced a socially conservative backlash in which evangelicals eventually played a large part. This backlash intensified with the legalization of abortion and the rise of the gay-rights movement during the 1970s. Still, evangelicals were slow to enter the Republican fold. Most voted for Democrat Jimmy Carter, a proud born-again Christian, in the 1976 presidential election.

Once in office, Carter did little to satisfy evangelicals' growing political concerns. Additionally, his administration supported a move by the IRS to revoke

the tax exemptions of de facto segregated Christian schools in the South. How important this was to the rise of the Religious Right in the late 1970s is the subject of some debate. Richard Land, the president of the Southern Baptist Convention's Ethics and Religious Liberty Committee, dismisses it as "a Beltway urban legend."

"Look, I was there," Land says. "It is absurd to claim that a mass movement concerned about the right to life was started over Christian schools that maybe 5 percent of our followers had children attending."

In any event, evangelicals shifted to Ronald Reagan in 1980 and have been reliably in the GOP column ever since. Contributing a third of the Republicans' 2004 vote, nearly four in ten party members are now evangelical. But a vocal minority has persisted in arguing that the GOP, as the party of the rich, isn't the best vehicle for a Christian political witness. "There are 2,000 Bible verses that deal

with caring for the poor," says Balmer. "Jesus never mentioned abortion."

The outcome of this debate may hinge on younger evangelicals, who have grown up in an era when the Religious Right was a fact of political life rather than a new innovation. "Some are less embedded in the subculture and will be less likely to hear the political cues," says Laura Olson, a Clemson University political science professor who has studied the evolution of evangelical political involvement. "They will be no less committed to pro-family issues, but they'll say, 'Let's talk about poverty, hunger, and the environment.'" Olson points out that even prominent liberal evangelicals—such leaders as Jim Wallis

and Tony Campolo—oppose abortion and hold orthodox views about homosexuality.

Jessica Echard, executive director of Eagle Forum, is a young Christian conservative who believes the social issues will remain paramount. “I don’t see the evangelical base energized by these new issues,” she says. “They care about babies, marriage, and what their children see on TV.”

Some changes may be inevitable, however. “As the number of evangelicals has grown, they have become more like the society around them,” says Olson. “That will lead to a diversity of opinion on a lot of issues.” Peter Brown, the assistant director of the Quinnipiac Polling Institute, agrees that on many issues “evangelicals are in line with the rest of mainstream America.” Yet Brown doesn’t foresee a real partisan shift among evangelical voters. “People vote based on values and comfort level,” he says. “There’s no evidence evangelicals are losing that comfort level with the Republicans just over the environment.”

John Green, an expert on religious voting trends at the University of Akron, raises a third possibility: that Republicans will keep the evangelical vote “by adjusting some of their positions.” Sen. Sam Brownback hopes to win the Christian Right vote in the 2008 primaries by combining a strong social conservatism with nontraditional positions on Third World poverty and the environment. In an interview with *Christianity Today*, former presidential speechwriter Michael Gerson, an evangelical, urged conservative Christians to focus on AIDS relief, assistance for Africa, and eradicating malaria.

When Pat Robertson is worried about global warming and a leading socially conservative senator is talking about AIDS, the prospect of a new Christian Right becomes impossible to entirely dismiss. ■

# Cold Case

What happened to the anthrax investigation?

By Justin Raimondo

THE FIVE-YEAR ANNIVERSARY of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon will witness a torrent of commentary reflecting on the moment and meaning of 9/11. Ceremonies will be enacted and we will honor our dead—while politicians, as usual, take the opportunity to make maximum use of the occasion. The War Party, quite naturally, will be in the lead, using this dark memorial for its own ends: we must never forget, we must re-energize our will to make war, we must dedicate ourselves to a future of unrelenting aggression against a billion-plus Muslims. You know the drill.

But one thing will escape public notice, something it seems everyone has let slip down the memory hole—the series of subsequent attacks that filled the nation with dread and fueled the War Party’s program of perpetual war abroad and unprecedented government repression at home: the anthrax attacks.

The smoke had hardly cleared from lower Manhattan before the news broke: ABC, NBC, CBS, and the *New York Post* all received letters containing crude anthrax spores. So did the offices of the company that publishes *The National Enquirer* in Boca Raton, Florida. The letters were postmarked Sept. 18, in Trenton, New Jersey.

The second wave came in the beginning of October: two letters, postmarked from Trenton, dated Oct. 9, were sent to the offices of senators Tom Daschle and Patrick Leahy. Only this time the spores were of the highly refined “weaponized” variety, a dry

powder ground into a dust designed to spread through the air and be inhaled quite easily. This strain of anthrax has been positively identified as the Ames variety, stored at USAMRIID, the U.S. government biological weapons research facility at Fort Detrick, Maryland, and a few other such labs.

Already reeling from 9/11, the nation went into panic mode. Capitol Hill shut down. Thousands took Cipro, the only known defense against anthrax infection. The airwaves were thick with ominous portents of more to come, and visions of a horrific bio-terror assault were conjured before our horrified eyes. The War Party was quick to jump on this opportunity and channel it into war hysteria directed at Iraq, with Andrew Sullivan, warblogger-in-chief, leading the charge:

At this point, it seems to me that a refusal to extend the war to Iraq is not even an option. We have to extend it to Iraq. It is by far the most likely source of this weapon; it is clearly willing to use such weapons in the future; and no war against terrorism of this kind can be won without dealing decisively with the Iraqi threat. We no longer have any choice in the matter. Slowly, incrementally, a Rubicon has been crossed. The terrorists have launched a biological weapon against the United States. They have therefore made biological warfare thinkable and thus repeatable. We once had a doctrine that such a Rubicon would be answered



with a nuclear response. We backed down on that threat in the Gulf War but Saddam didn't dare use biological weapons then. Someone has dared to use them now. Our response must be as grave as this new threat.

Bill Kristol, less hysterical but hardly more credible, wondered in *The Weekly Standard*

What if the anthrax cases in Florida are an act of terrorism? What if the presence of the anthrax spores there is connected to the fact that a few of the September 11 terrorists, led by Mohammed Atta, lived within a few miles? What if Atta—or some other bin Laden operative—had access to anthrax from the terrorist-sponsoring country that we know has a long record of developing anthrax as a biological weapon, Iraq?

He postulated that at the now famous Prague meeting—which Czech police deny ever took place—Atta not only planned the 9/11 attacks with an Iraqi intelligence agent but also hatched the anthrax plot. Given that this mythical meeting was alleged to have occurred at the Prague airport, well within range of security cameras, one wonders if passing vials of anthrax might have proved somewhat problematic. But the War Party didn't need especially logical arguments to stoke the fires of American rage.

We've since been treated to a parade of utopian justifications for the invasion of Iraq, but in the days immediately following 9/11, neoconservatives seized upon something more elemental: American grief and fear. Just as the shock began to subside, the anthrax attacks provided a vital sequel in their propaganda campaign designed to link Iraq to terrorism in the U.S. and drag us into war. The *New York Times* reported,

For months, intelligence agencies searched for Iraqi fingerprints and scientists investigated whether Baghdad had somehow obtained the so-called Ames strain of anthrax. Scientists also repeatedly analyzed the powder from the anthrax-laced envelopes for signs of chemical additives that would point to Iraq. 'We looked for any shred of evidence that would bear on this, or any foreign source,' a senior intelligence official said of an Iraq connection. 'It's just not there.' ... 'I know there are a number of people who would love an excuse to get after Iraq,' said a top federal scientist involved in the investigation.

Best efforts of Kristol & Co. notwithstanding, the evidence didn't support an Iraq link. It pointed in a different direction—much closer to home—but in the years that have followed, the investigation has stalled and scapegoated, never giving Americans an answer to who sent terror through our mail.

Days before the anthrax story broke—but after the deadly missives had been sent—military police headquarters in Quantico, Virginia received an anonymous letter containing important clues to the mystery. Written by someone with a detailed knowledge of USAMRIID, the letter stated that Dr. Ayaad Assaad, an Egyptian-born American citizen who had formerly worked at Ft. Detrick was at the center of a terrorist plot against America. The author claimed to have worked with Assaad.

Interviewed by the FBI, Assaad was quickly cleared of any connection with the anthrax attacks, but his story points so clearly in the direction of the real terrorists that it is difficult to believe federal law enforcement failed to follow through.

Someone had tried to set Assaad up, but whoever wrote that poison-pen

letter was also very likely trying to divert attention away from the actual perpetrators. As Assaad put it: "My theory is, whoever this person is knew in advance what was going to happen (and created) a suitable, well-fitted scapegoat for this action."

Surely this is the kind of lead law enforcement would normally be quite interested in, especially given that the anthrax attacks would become public knowledge a few days later, but, oddly, that was not the case.

For years, Assaad had been the victim of a group of scientists at Ft. Detrick who styled themselves the "Camel Club." They sent him an obscene 47-stanza, 235-line poem and proffered a constant stream of racist anti-Arab epithets. "In [Assaad's] honor we created this beast; it represents life lower than yeast," they wrote. The "beast" referred to a rubber camel outfitted with sexually explicit appendages, delivered to his mailbox. Assaad filed a formal complaint and was eventually offered an official apology by the U.S. Army.

The early 1990s were "a turbulent period of labor complaints and recriminations among rival scientists" at USAMRIID, the *Hartford Courant* reported, which coincided with a number of other more serious—indeed, outright sinister—problems. Soon after the anthrax attacks, the *Courant* revealed that 26 sets of biological toxins—not only anthrax but also hanta virus, Ebola virus, and other lethal pathogens—had gone missing from the Ft. Detrick facility. An inquiry "found evidence that someone was secretly entering a lab late at night to conduct unauthorized research, apparently involving anthrax. A numerical counter on a piece of lab equipment had been rolled back to hide work done by the mystery researcher, who left the misspelled label 'antrax' in the machine's electronic memory, according to the documents obtained by the *Courant*."

This “mystery researcher” is not all that mysterious, as the *Courant* reports:

Documents from the inquiry show that one unauthorized person who was observed entering the lab building at night was Langford’s predecessor, Lt. Col. Philip Zack, who at the time no longer worked at Fort Detrick. A surveillance camera recorded Zack being let in at 8:40 p.m. on Jan. 23, 1992, apparently by Dr. Marian Rippy, a lab pathologist and close friend of Zack’s, according to a report filed by a security guard.

Both Zack and Rippy were charter members of the Camel Club. They left Ft. Detrick “voluntarily,” shortly after Assaad’s complaint.

The FBI won’t release the Quantico letter, claiming it would identify secret sources in the continuing investigation. But FBI spokesman Chris Murray told the *Courant*, “the FBI is not tracking the source of the anonymous letter, despite its curious timing, coming a matter of days before the existence of anthrax-laced mail became known.”

Rather, the bureau turned its resources on one Steven Hatfill, a former USAMRIID scientist against whom there was not an iota of physical evidence. The case against him consisted solely of public pronouncements on the subject of bio-terrorism and accord with a profile of the potential anthrax killer. Yet for two years, Hatfill’s privacy and sanity were held hostage by the FBI. Washington, D.C.’s *City Paper* relates a spectacle at once menacing and pathetic:

The video cameras seem to be the latest hassle. One time, [press liaison Pat] Clawson remembers, Hatfill spotted a few agents trying to rig a camera to a lamppost across from his apartment building. He decided to have a little fun and go out there and offer his assistance.

“What are you guys doing?” Hatfill asked, according to Clawson.

The agents told him that they were installing an ‘Internet relay device.’ Whatever that means. He offered to help them install it anyway. The joke in Hatfill’s camp is that he’s secured the best Internet service in the District.

Our tax dollars at work. More tax dollars were spent draining a pond a few miles from the Ft. Detrick lab. Four weeks and 50,000 gallons later, a veritable army of feds, both FBI and postal agents, came up with a couple of logs, a few fishing lures, and an old gun unrelated to the attacks. Tests for traces of anthrax came up negative.

Hatfill was never charged and is now suing the *New York Times*, *Vanity Fair*, and *Reader’s Digest*—all of which ran articles implicating him as the culprit—as well as the government in an attempt to get his reputation back.

After the misdirection involving Iraq and the dramatics surrounding Hatfill, the fact remains that whoever was behind the anthrax attacks is still lurking out there. And perhaps the biggest mystery aside from the identity of the culprit or culprits is why the “Amerithrax” investigation—the silly name given the case by U.S. government investigators—was so suddenly and unceremoniously dropped, especially when there is plenty of publicly available evidence containing a rich trove of clues.

The FBI is unusually cavalier about its failure to bring the perpetrators to justice. Assistant Director Michael A. Mason told the *Washington Times*, “Despite our very, very, very best efforts, we still might not be able to bring it home. This would not be the first case in the FBI’s history that remained unsolved. It simply happens to be the first case that has received this level of publicity that has not yet been solved.”

That’s a casual way to treat the investigation of an attempted mass poisoning that occurred mere weeks after the worst terrorist attacks in American history.

Either the bureau is curiously lax or they received orders from on high to pursue a certain trail of evidence by going after one suspect and neglecting others. Who, other than the culprits, would benefit from allowing the case to remain unsolved? Who would profit from widespread fear that anthrax had come from some shadowy foreign source rather than a racist clique? It’s impossible to ignore the fact that certain of the administration’s goals were served: the postal pestilence created an atmosphere in which the PATRIOT Act sailed through Congress without a single member having read it. The attacks also helped amplify the horror of 9/11, which gave impetus to the War Party that had long been agitating for the invasion of Iraq.

The whole matter cries out for an investigation, if not by the U.S. government, then by the media. So where are our vaunted investigative reporters? Where is the Fourth Estate? The resounding silence we hear from these glorified stenographers is a sad testament to the degeneration and domestication of the species once known as journalists. Meanwhile, the evidence molders, ignored, in a dark corner, while the world moves on to new crises—fresh fears of terrorist attack, only this time nuclear instead of bacteriological.

If the run-up to war with Iraq required putting a scare into the American people, then no doubt the prelude to confronting Iran will require a similar softening up process. Last time around, five people died and 22 were sickened. How many will it be tomorrow? ■

*Justin Raimondo is editorial director of Antiwar.com.*

# You Go West, Girl!

Pioneers in petticoats would disdain today's oppression studies.

**By Roger D. McGrath**

I LOVE TALES of heroism. They inspire me. And because they do, I am perplexed by those people who are not similarly inspired. As a student and later as a professor, I found professors, teaching assistants, and students who wanted to hear only tales of oppression, repression, and brutality—as long as the oppression, repression, and brutality was perpetrated by white males. I have watched departments of history become departments of victimology, with a kind of competition among various groups for supremacy among victims, leading to an emphasis on stories of those who had suffered and lost, rather than of those who had suffered, endured, and triumphed. The former are worth studying, but the latter are worth emulating.

In 1985, I presented a paper on violence in the Old West at a historical conference. I described how women, other than prostitutes, rarely suffered from violence, were treated with respect, and often displayed extraordinary courage. For this I was attacked by two women professors in the audience. I provided them with a wealth of statistics and dozens of anecdotes. That only made it worse. It was about then that I realized I was confronting the religion of political correctness and that one of the articles of faith was victimhood. These particular women were not delighted to hear of the derring-do and heroism of their frontier sisters. But history is full of such stories.

The first group to travel overland to California was the Bidwell party, also referred to as the Bartleson-Bidwell party. In the group was Nancy Roberts Kelsey. She was all of 18-years-old, had

an 18-month-old daughter, and had lost an infant son only three months before the trek began. When asked why she was willing to undertake a journey from Missouri across half a continent to California, she replied, "Where my husband goes, I go. I can better endure the hardships of the journey than the anxieties for an absent husband." The husband was the redheaded and fiery-tempered Ben Kelsey, like his wife Kentucky born.

In May 1841, about 60 members of the Western Emigration Society gathered at Sapling Grove in eastern Kansas. Many of them had already trekked hundreds of miles just to get there. They were tough, ornery, independent, and optimistic. They knew nothing about the Far West. "Our ignorance of the route was complete," said John Bidwell. "We knew that California lay west, and that was the extent of our knowledge." One member of the party produced a map, which showed two large rivers running westward from the Great Salt Lake to California. He suggested that they take along tools for constructing boats so they could float downstream to California on the second half of the journey.

Left to their own devices these pioneers might not even have made it as far as the Great Salt Lake. They had the good fortune, however, to fall in with a party of Jesuit missionaries guided by one of the greatest of all American mountain men, Irish-born Tom Fitzpatrick, and several of his beaver-trapping buddies. He and his men smoothed the way for the missionaries and the Bidwell party all the way to Soda Springs in southeastern Idaho. From

there, Fitzpatrick headed for the Pacific Northwest. Half of the members of the Bidwell party decided that sticking with Fitzpatrick was more important than reaching California. Most of them would settle in Oregon's Willamette Valley.

The other half were determined to continue on to their original destination. Thirty-two strong, they included one woman—Nancy Kelsey—and her daughter, Martha Ann. Fitzpatrick drew them a map in the dirt, warning that if they missed Mary's River (today's Humboldt) they would die long before reaching California. In mid-August, without guide or compass, they turned south, following the Bear River into Utah. They skirted the northern shore of the Great Salt Lake and in the blazing desert to the west were forced to abandon their wagons and pack everything on horses and mules. Carrying her baby in front of her, Nancy Kelsey rode bareback. California was hundreds of miles away.

The party stumbled upon the headwaters of the Humboldt and followed its path across Nevada. Occasionally, Paiutes blocked their path. "At one place the Indians surrounded us, armed with bows and arrows," said Nancy, "but my husband leveled his gun at the chief and made him order his Indians out of arrow range." The pioneers reached the sink of the Humboldt near present-day Lovelock and began a grueling trek across Forty-Mile Desert. They then moved south to the Walker River and, low on food and nearly exhausted, began the climb into the Sierra Nevada, which Bidwell described as "naked mountains whose summits still retained the snows of per-

haps a thousand years.” They did not cross the crest of the Sierra until the end of October.

“We had a difficult time to find a way down the mountain,” said Nancy. “At one time I was left alone for nearly a day, and as I was afraid of the Indians, I sat all the while with my baby in my lap on the back of my horse. ... It seemed to me while I was there alone the moaning of the wind through the pines was the loneliest sound I ever heard.”

She and the others were soon on foot. The descent was so steep that riding was impossible. Nancy recalled, “At one place four pack animals fell over a bluff. ... We were then out of provisions, having killed and eaten all our cattle. I walked barefooted [her shoes had long since disintegrated] until my feet blistered. We lived on roasted acorns for two days. My husband came very near dying with cramps, and it was suggested to leave him, but I said I never would do that. ... At one place I was so weak I could hardly stand.”

They eventually followed the Stanislaus River down into the San Joaquin Valley. Their first meal in California proper was a coyote. Bidwell noted that he “greedily devoured” the lungs and windpipe, his share of the beast. Finally, on Nov. 4, 1841 the Bidwell party arrived at the ranch of Dr. John Marsh near Mt. Diablo and concluded a six-month overland trek. The journey made Nancy Kelsey the first woman to cross overland to California from the United States. By the time she arrived, she was five months pregnant and an inspiration to the men. Said Bidwell party member Joseph Chiles, “Her cheerful nature and kind heart brought many a ray of sunshine through the clouds that gathered round a company of so many weary travelers. She bore the fatigue of the journey with so much heroism, patience and kindness, that there still exists a warmth in every heart for the mother and her child.”

Nancy Kelsey and her husband built a log cabin in the Napa Valley, a mile south of today’s Calistoga. In February 1842 Nancy gave birth to Sarah Jane, who lived only one week before dying. In September 1843 she gave birth to another daughter, Margaret, and in April 1846 to a son, Andrew.

On June 14, 1846, American settlers in northern California launched the Bear Flag Revolt by taking control of Sonoma and declaring the establishment of the Bear Flag Republic. Nancy Kelsey was there, holding two-month-old Andrew in her arms. She watched as the American revolutionaries raised the Bear Flag with its humped-backed grizzly and lone star. She had reason to be proud of the new flag—she had made it using cloth from her own petticoats. She would soon be called the Betsy Ross of California. Ben was a prominent Bear Flagger but got into a dispute with John C. Fremont and gave him a tongue-lashing when the latter assumed command of the revolutionaries. “The Kelseys were well known for their use of wicked and blasphemous language,” said Nancy, “—made a mule-skinner blush!”

When Ben later fell sick with malaria, Nancy swung into the saddle and rode hell-bent for Sonoma and medicine. En route an Indian, known locally as Chief Augustine, tried to lasso her and drag her off the horse. Although Nancy was without her pistol, she managed to escape and continue her wild ride to town. She returned with the medicine and told Ben of the attempted horse theft and of her narrow escape. Ben exploded with anger and bolted out of his sickbed. He tracked down Augustine and killed him with a pistol shot.

Ben battled with various health problems for the rest of his life. Nonetheless, he was an enterprising sort, building saw and grist mills and toll bridges, gold mining, and carving ranches out of the wilderness. He made bundles of money

and lost equal amounts. Everywhere he went, Nancy followed, the good trouper that she was. The mountain man James Clyman, who frequently used the Kelseys’ hunting cabins in the northern end of the Napa Valley during the late 1840s, described Nancy as a fine-looking woman. She continued to have children: Mary Ellen in 1848, Nancy Rose in 1851, William in 1854, Georgia Ann in 1859, and Samuel in 1861. On a family trip to Texas in 1861, Mary Ellen was captured and scalped by Comanche. She survived but was never the same again and died five years later. Samuel died at 18 in an accident during a harvest. The same year Ben Kelsey died.

Through all this and more, Nancy Kelsey persevered. After her husband’s death she settled on a ranch in the Cuyama Valley. She raised cattle and chickens, administered pioneer herbal remedies to ailing neighbors, delivered babies, and once rode a hundred miles in one day on a mission of mercy. She died of skin cancer at the age of 73 in 1896 and was buried on her ranch in what is now called Kelsey Canyon. A plaque marks her grave.

There were Nancy Kelseys on every frontier of the Old West. They were in the mining camps, on the cattle ranges, and in the timber towns. They were also on the last frontier, the Far North. No woman there figured more prominently than Belinda Mulroney. Born in Ireland but reared partly in Scranton, Pennsylvania, where her father worked in the coal mines, Belinda left home at the age of 18 to attend the Columbian Exposition in Chicago and make her fortune. She opened a small restaurant and had saved the tidy sum of \$8,000 before the exposition closed. Her next stop was California, where she promptly lost her money in a bad investment. Wiser and more determined than ever, she shipped aboard a coastal steamer, *City of Topeka*, as a stewardess. She quickly



gained a reputation for resourcefulness, business acumen, quick wit, and spirit. When a snobbish passenger aboard the ship condescendingly told her to black his boots, she told him that if she saw his boots outside his cabin door she would throw a pitcher of water on them. When a baby had to be delivered, she did the job, while the ship's captain stood discreetly outside the cabin door reading instructions from a medical text.

The captain was so impressed by Belinda that he soon put her in charge of purchasing supplies for the ship. For her extra duties she received a 10 percent commission on the cost of supplies.

When news of the great gold strike in the Klondike region of the Yukon reached the Alaskan coast during the spring of 1897, Belinda had saved \$5,000. She said goodbye to the captain and used her money to buy all the cotton goods and hot-water bottles she could find. She packed her goods from the port of Dyea over treacherous Chilkoot Pass and then floated on a raft hundreds of miles down the Yukon River to Dawson, a mining camp that was fast becoming the great boomtown of the Far North.

Stepping ashore, Belinda threw the last coin in her pocket—a mining camp tradition—into the river and exclaimed, “Never again will I need such small change.” She was right. She sold her cotton goods and hot-water bottles on Dawson's main street at a 600 percent profit. She opened a diner that was crowded with men daily and built cabins that sold before they were finished. The money rolled in, but she decided to take another gamble and open a roadhouse east of Dawson in the heart of the mines, where Bonanza Creek pours into the Klondike River. By the fall of '97, her roadhouse, The Magnet, was open. Costs for meals and lodging, and for whiskey and cigars, were the highest in the Yukon. No matter. The Magnet was in the midst of the mines, and the sourdoughs threw gold

nuggets onto the bar. Belinda was also in a location to get the first word on every new claim. By winter she was an investor in several valuable mines.

Belinda was tough and canny but played straight and square. It was not always reciprocated. When a boat loaded with supplies was wrecked on a sandbar in the Yukon River, Belinda went into partnership with Alex McDonald to salvage the cargo. “Big Alex” stood well over 6'7” and weighed nearly 300 lbs. He had begun his stay in the Far North as a laborer and had worked his way up to managing an Alaskan trading company. Through the acquisition of one mine after another he became a multimillionaire and would soon be known as the “King of the Klondike.”

Mulroney and McDonald had a crew salvage the cargo, but McDonald had the goods divided before Mulroney arrived at the site. McDonald took crates full of foodstuffs for himself and left cases of whiskey and boxes containing rubber boots for Mulroney. With winter approaching and starvation a real possibility that first season of the rush to the Klondike, foodstuffs would be at a premium. “You'll pay through the nose for this,” Belinda told Big Alex.

The winter was severe, and McDonald made a small fortune on his stores of food. Early in the spring of 1898, however, there was an unusual heat wave, causing a sudden thaw and flooding the Klondike. Work in the mines was impossible without—rubber boots. None other than Big Alex arrived at Mulroney's, pleading for rubber boots for his men. Belinda sold him the boots but made him pay \$100 a pair, the equivalent of \$3,000 in today's money. Belinda used those profits and others to build the Fairview Hotel on Dawson's main street during the spring and summer. The most elegant hotel in the Far North, the Fairview had 22 steam-heated rooms, electric lights, Turkish steam baths, dining tables

spread with linen, sterling silver, and bone China, cut-glass chandeliers, and an orchestra playing in the lobby.

Nearly everything that went into the Fairview had to be freighted from the port of Skagway. Belinda made the long and dangerous journey to the Alaskan coast to personally supervise the operation. She arrived there only to learn that Joe Brooks, the packer she had hired, had moved her goods just two miles inland before dumping them when getting a better offer to transport whiskey for Bill McPhee. Joe Brooks was now about to learn what Big Alex had learned—don't cross Belinda Mulroney. Belinda marched to the Skagway wharves and hired the roughest men she could find. Legend has it that she then instigated a fight among them and made the last man standing her foreman. Whether that's true, she was soon leading these lads up the trail. They caught up with Joe Brooks and his crew and quickly made the freighter regret his decision. Dumping McPhee's cases of whiskey on the side of the trail, they loaded the goods intended for the Fairview onto Brooks's pack mules and, with Belinda sitting on Brooks's own pinto horse, climbed White Pass.

The Fairview Hotel was a cash cow. The bar alone took in \$6,000 during its first 24 hours of operation. The dining room was equally lucrative.

By the fall of '98, Belinda was known internationally. *Scribner's* magazine was calling her “the richest woman in the Klondike” and others had christened her the “Queen of Grand Forks.” She became a character in the novels of James Oliver Curwood, and her dog, Nero, became immortalized as Buck in Jack London's *The Call of the Wild*.

In 1900, Belinda Mulroney married Charles Eugene Carbonneau, purportedly a French count with estates in Europe. He was bold, dashing, and French-Canadian but no count of any kind. Before the truth leaked out, the

couple honeymooned in Europe as the Count and Countess. In Paris they rode about in a carriage pulled by a matched pair of snow-white horses. An Egyptian footman unrolled a velvet carpet whenever they stepped from the carriage.

Upon their return to the Klondike, Belinda became the manager of the Gold Run Mining Company. When she took control of the company it was bleeding red. Within 18 months she had it making millions again. The "count," meanwhile, was using millions of Belinda's money to invest in European business ventures, but the Great War ruined his fortunes. He went quite mad and spent the rest of his life institutionalized.

Through hard work and daring gambles, Belinda recovered her lost fortune. One of her new businesses was the Dome City Bank of Alaska. When an investor accused one of Belinda's sisters of embezzling from the bank, Belinda collared the man and horse-whipped him until, in the words of the *Fairbanks Times*, he "cried like a baby." The man later claimed that Belinda had two men help her. "I needed no help," she replied. "Twenty friends, all old sourdoughs of Alaska, begged to be allowed to take the work off my hands, but it was a family affair and I attended to it to the best of my ability. A blackmailer simply received a little Alaska justice."

Belinda eventually left the Far North and built a large estate near Yakima, Washington. She lived there until shortly before her death at the age of 95 in 1967.

I suspect that if some professor told Nancy Kelsey or Belinda Mulroney, or the thousands of heroic sisters who came between them, that they were oppressed, repressed, and brutalized victims, they might give that professor a little Alaska justice. ■

*Roger D. McGrath is a historian in California.*

**An Aug. 23 Republican staff report issued by the House Intelligence Committee reflects the growing pressure by neoconservatives in the Bush administration to toughen American policy towards Iran.**

The staff report, which was made public by chairman Peter Hoekstra, criticizes the American intelligence community for lack of hard intelligence on Iran's alleged WMD program. The report was based on unclassified source information and was written by former CIA analyst Fred Fleitz, who most recently was a staff aide to John Bolton. The Fleitz report is critical of Director of National Intelligence John Negroponte for making little progress in developing better information on Iran and relies on Israeli sources regarding the state of Iran's nuclear program. U.S. intelligence has estimated a five-to-ten-year scenario for Iran's acquisition of a nuclear weapon, while the Israelis are forecasting six months. The report is a weapon that will be used by neocon Republicans like Newt Gingrich and *Weekly Standard* editor Bill Kristol to further justify a get-tough policy with Iran. Both Kristol and Gingrich have expressed impatience with Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's support of multinational diplomacy, and Kristol advocates an immediate U.S. bombing campaign directed against Tehran. American intelligence officials responded privately to the report by noting that it was an attempt to "politicize" the intelligence analysis on Iran, just as was done with intelligence on Saddam Hussein prior to the 2003 invasion of Iraq. They also note critically that Israeli intelligence on Iran is no better than was Israeli intelligence on Hezbollah prior to the Lebanese invasion.



**Last month, Israel's Mossad sent an assassination team to the Syrian capital of Damascus to carry out the killing of Khalid Meshal,**

the head of Hamas in exile, but Syrian intelligence apparently spirited Meshal away to a safe haven before the attack could be mounted. Ironically, the Israelis were disguised as international aid workers assisting Lebanese refugees. In 1997, Meshal survived a botched assassination attempt while he was living in Jordan. Mossad agents using Canadian passports injected poison into his ear in the street, but two Israelis were caught. King Hussein of Jordan demanded and received the antidote to the poison in exchange for the return of the two men.



**Afghanistan has set another record for opium cultivation, up by 40 percent since 2005.**

The poppy crop has become so lucrative that in many areas it has led to a de facto alliance between the Taliban and local warlords to resist government eradication efforts. Fully 371,000 acres of poppies are under cultivation and Afghanistan now supplies more than 90 percent of the world's heroin. With 70 percent of the local economy derived from drugs, the country is quickly moving towards becoming a narco-state, and even its president, Hamid Karzai, has admitted that many government ministers get payoffs from drug traffickers. The Karzai government and the U.S.-led coalition fear going after drug production too aggressively because many poor farmers might join the Taliban if their livelihood were taken away. Ironically, the Taliban completely eradicated poppy production in 2000.

*Philip Giraldi, a former CIA Officer, is a partner in Cannistraro Associates.*

# Arts & Letters

## FILM

[*The Science of Sleep*]

### Perchance to Dream

By Steve Sailer

"The Science of Sleep," a surrealist romantic comedy by famed music video director Michel Gondry, is a manic but sweet-tempered reverie about why no woman in her right mind should fall in love with a truly imaginative artist, such as, say, Michel Gondry.

The young Mexican leading man, Gael García Bernal, freed from the portentousness of playing Che Guevara in "The Motorcycle Diaries," is sublimely charming as Gondry's alter ego, shy and self-absorbed Stephane, a childlike graphic designer whose inability to tell his waking life from his outlandish, ever mutating dreams beguiles and exasperates the girl next door, Stéphanie (Charlotte Gainsbourg).

The boyish Gondry, whose video biography is aptly entitled "I've Been Twelve Forever," may strike some viewers as terminally twee, but many will find his "Science of Sleep" a funny, sad, and dazzling slice of the Ambien Age.

The profundity of dreams has been overrated from the Old Testament through Freud, whose now fading renown was launched by *The Interpretation of Dreams*. Gondry sides instead with Vladimir Nabokov, who complained of dreams' "mental mediocrity." The director sees his dreams as amusing raw material for his personal artistry, "a big sea of all the events of my life."

Back in the mid-1980s, when the music-video boom was at full flood, I worried that, surely, video directors would soon exhaust all the visual ideas imaginable. I remembered, though, that in the 1820s after poor, depressed John Stuart Mill had briefly found solace in melody, he had become similarly "tormented by the thought of the exhaustibility of musical combinations." Well, composers turned out to have a few more tunes up their sleeves, so, I reasoned, music videos would survive as well.

And yet, they almost didn't. The art form entered creative freefall, viewer boredom set in, and MTV largely switched to pioneering reality television.

It was easy for a music-video director to be proclaimed a genius in the 1980s when everything was new, but to make a mark in the been-there-done-that 1990s, as the Frenchman Gondry did starting with his clip for Björk's "Human Behavior" in 1993, required exceptional talent.

Gondry shared a Best Original Screenplay Oscar for 2004's "Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind," in which he directed Jim Carrey as a man who has his memories of his ex-girlfriend surgically erased, but it was a gift because screenwriter Charlie Kaufman was that exceptional film's auteur. Gondry's cinematic contributions to "Eternal Sunshine" were relatively subdued because the emphasis was on Kaufman and Carrey finally achieving artistic restraint.

In "The Science of Sleep," however, Gondry's set-design inspiration runs joyously amok. More surprisingly, Gondry's trilingual screenplay is so deft that it's impossible not to wonder if Kaufman did a rewrite. (Gondry denies it.)

Having long lived in Mexico with his recently deceased father, Stephane is

lured by his mother back to the Paris apartment where he was born with the promise of a dream job at a promotional calendar company. (Because Stephane speaks French no better than the Parisians speak Spanish, most of the film's witty dialogue is in their mutual second language, English.) He optimistically shows the owner his portfolio of the paintings he has done for his definitively inappropriate idea of a calendar of "disastrology," with July, for example, represented by TWA Flight 800 exploding in flames over the Atlantic. Instead, he is put to work pasting the names of the sponsoring auto parts wholesalers into pinup calendars for garages.

Bored by his duties, he retreats into his boyhood hobbies of constructing whimsical inventions like the One Second Time Machine and napping. He increasingly slips into a dream world apparently fabricated out of materials found around his house. (Gondry's do-it-yourself aesthetic resembles a 3-D version of Terry Gilliam's animation for "Monty Python.") Asleep, Stephane is the popular host, cameraman, and drummer of "Stephane TV," filmed with a cardboard camera on a homemade set soundproofed with egg cartons.

Unfortunately, he suffers from one of those only-in-the-movies medical conditions where he can't tell wakefulness from sleep, with comic consequences for his job—he's not putting in enough hours at the office even by French standards—and faltering attempts at romance with Stéphanie. She is enthralled by his originality and childish neediness but is also aware, as Gondry ruefully explained in an interview, that Stephane is "a little insane . . . . Being down-to-earth is a more attractive quality for women." ■

Rated R for language, some sexual content, and nudity.

## BOOKS

[*Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq*, Thomas E. Ricks, The Penguin Press, 482 pages]

# Worse Than A Crime

By Wayne Merry

SOMETIMES ONE CAN judge a book by its cover. Certainly Thomas Ricks lets you know where he stands in his title. However, a word of warning: anyone seeking a *Fahrenheit 9/11*-style mockery of U.S. policy should look elsewhere. There is no gloating or patronizing in these pages. Indeed, for any patriotic American, Ricks provides a deeply painful reading experience.

This book is a chronicle of waste on a fantastic scale: waste of American blood and treasure, of whatever social cohesion and security the peoples of Iraq enjoyed, and of real opportunities for on-the-ground success in post-Saddam Iraq. Ricks—a two-decade military-affairs reporter for the *Wall Street Journal* and now the *Washington Post*—covers the Iraq adventure from conception to the present. Much of his material is in the public record—his notes are quite candid about use of open sources—but is greatly enriched by the wealth of his contacts, whose trenchant comments reflect the frustration of dedicated public servants let down by their civilian policymakers and, too often, senior commanders.

Ricks can be almost overly fair and balanced. He finds occasion to say positive things about most of the authors of our war policy, perhaps to avoid the demonizing that marks political discourse on Iraq (and is so characteristic of the neocons themselves). Having written often and with much sympathy over the years about the American military, Ricks is unsparing of the generals. He docu-

ments how these officers—all the product of Vietnam—deliberately forgot the lessons of counter-insurgency warfare learned at such cost in Indochina and so wasted critical months responding to the growing insurgency in post-Saddam Iraq.

Like Ricks, I feel deep regard and affection for my counterparts in uniform, but it is hard not to acknowledge his case against officers who behaved as if post-conflict chaos were new in warfare and who repeated all the blunders of previous failed counter-insurgency campaigns by other armies in other wars. The American armed forces had rebuilt themselves after Vietnam into the finest operational instrument this country has ever fielded in peacetime but chose to ignore the potential of asymmetric insurgency warfare against which their skills and weapons would be of little use. Lessons jettisoned by generals cost many a broken trooper.

Comparison is inevitable between *Fiasco* and *Cobra II*, the recently published account of the invasion of Iraq by Michael Gordon and Bernard Trainor. The two works are not parallel, as *Cobra II* concludes with the fall of Baghdad, only a third of the way into Ricks's account. Each book has its merits and both are extremely well-sourced from within the military. Ricks is more comprehensive and much more readable for average civilians, as he avoids the perva-

*Cobra II* explains more of the lengthy planning phase and the doctrinal disputes that led Defense Secretary Rumsfeld deliberately to under-resource U.S. forces going into Iraq. This is the most astonishing of all the policy failures of the war. Ever since Grant, the American way of war has been more or less industrial, to win with resources. We are a society that prefers to spill money rather than blood—at least, American blood. While our forces were under-resourced in the opening months of Korea and after Pearl Harbor, this was a product of policy failure. Uniquely in our history, in Iraq our war effort was under-resourced as a result of policy choice. Even more than the fundamental misconceptions that took this country into Iraq, the decision to shortchange our troops warrants a full congressional investigation of the type that sought responsibility for the disaster at Pearl Harbor.

Second, Gordon and Trainor correctly identify the greatest intelligence failure of the war, greater than the cock-up on WMD: underestimating the scale and ferocity of the *fedayeen* irregular combatants who attacked American troops from almost the first day. The *fedayeen* attacks not only slowed the ground campaign but were a harbinger of things to come after the proclamation of "Mission Accomplished." Ricks describes the ensuing insurgency extremely well but

THIS BOOK IS A CHRONICLE OF WASTE: WASTE OF AMERICAN BLOOD AND TREASURE, OF WHATEVER SOCIAL COHESION AND SECURITY THE PEOPLES OF IRAQ ENJOYED, AND OF REAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR ON-THE-GROUND SUCCESS.

sive mil-speak and jargon burdening *Cobra II*. That book cries out for a glossary and organizational charts. After all, there are many in this great land who, through no particular fault of their own, may not know the relationship of an RCT to an MEF or be aware that a regiment in the Marine Corps is not the same as one in the Army.

*Cobra II* examines two key issues in greater depth than does *Fiasco*. First,

gives only passing attention to the earlier and ominous experience with irregular warfare on the road to Baghdad.

*Fiasco* is, nonetheless, essential reading. It can be difficult to recall just how many and varied have been the failures of American policy in Iraq, so a clearly written history of the war to date helps keep current failures in proper perspective.

While *Fiasco* is a rich volume, there are some significant omissions about



broader topics. There is very little in the book about the role of Israel in U.S. policy or about the impact on Turkey, where public suspicion and hostility toward America are now at horrendous levels, or on Iran and the neighboring Arab states. Ricks does not say much about how conflating Saddam with bin Laden has increased the terrorist problem we might have controlled. *Fiasco* stops short of assessing the impact of this adventure on other U.S. interests, including our traditional alliance relationships and the price of petroleum. Most absent in a book about the U.S. military is a better discussion of how much the Iraq adventure has devastated the wellness and capabilities of our fighting forces, especially the combat units of the Army, Marine Corps, Reserves, and National Guard. Missing entirely is reference to the shell-game funding of the war through supplemental appropriations four years into the conflict, as the Defense Department's regular budget pretends there is no war. These issues confirm the basic theme of the work,

that U.S. policymakers have been fundamentally wrong about Iraq and consistently dishonest about their errors.

On a key point of analysis, I simply disagree with Ricks. He says the invasion of Iraq "was based on perhaps the worst war plan in American history." Yes, the plan was damn poor, but we have seen worse. Three examples may suffice. My Bronze Medal for Bad War Planning goes to the Wilson administration, which had over two years to prepare an army and did not and then conducted a mobilization that remains the greatest litany of waste and mismanagement by the U.S. government in the 20th century. The Silver Medal goes to the Lincoln administration, which ignored the sage advice of Winfield Scott and proceeded with its On-to-Richmond campaign, a true fiasco, while Secretary of State Seward actually sought a war with Britain believing it would rally the South to the old colors. The Gold Medal goes to the Madison administration, which went to war with the British Empire virtually without an army or intent to create one, believing citizen militia more formidable than "mercenaries," and would have lacked a navy had Jefferson had his way. We then invaded Canada on the expectation of a cakewalk conquest with no effective resistance. It was fortunate indeed for the young Republic that Wellington refused command of the expeditionary force sent to settle our hash.

No, Washington's record of intelligence failure, faulty policy conception, and willful blindness to reality is more the norm than an exception when our country has gone to war. What makes Iraq special—and dreadful—is that the policy has not improved in over three years of contact with reality. Ricks shows how the armed forces on the ground have relearned many lessons the hard way, but the learning curve of our policy leadership remains flat. Previous administrations bungled their way into wars but then mostly pulled themselves together to serve the best interests of the country. The United States more than once recovered from initial blun-

ders to achieve extraordinary success. Only in Iraq is Washington's pursuit of folly so dogged. Even Lyndon Johnson and Robert McNamara demonstrated a limited capacity to learn. Not this crew.

Ricks completes his book by examining various options for the future. Unfortunately, his options all assume that American disengagement from the war would inevitably result in conditions worse than if we persevere. Although he does not say so explicitly, Ricks evidently believes we are stuck with and in Iraq for a long time to come, that we cannot walk away from our failures. I would have liked to see in *Fiasco* a fair assessment of what an Aiken option—declare victory and leave—would entail in probable broken crockery. The administration's nightmare scenarios about that option strike me as today's WMD scare.

There are, after all, massive risks and costs to staying in Iraq, with no guarantee of a better outcome than if we leave. There are ample reasons to disengage. First, American interests around the globe are so compromised by our policy in Iraq that even "success" there would come at an unacceptable cost everywhere else. Second, America is sufficiently robust to recover from acknowledgment of error and failure in Iraq. We abandoned the conquest of Canada and let South Vietnam go without long-term damage to our basic interests. Third, at this point we may not be capable of success in Iraq, and the fiasco Ricks describes so well is now irredeemable. Finally, the U.S. presence in Iraq feeds the multiple failures of our policy throughout the Middle East and Islamic world: with Iran, Syria, Lebanon, the Palestinians, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Turkey, and beyond. Tom Ricks is dead right when he describes the U.S. adventure in Iraq as a "fiasco," but when I look at U.S. policy across the region that term seems entirely inadequate. ■

*Wayne Merry is a former State Department and Pentagon official and a member of the Coalition for a Realistic Foreign Policy.*

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[*The Catholic Experience in America*, Joseph A. Varacalli, Greenwood Press, 339 pages]

# What the Bishops Hath Wrought

By Thomas E. Woods Jr.

JOSEPH VARACALLI is very much an unsung hero of American Catholic intellectual life. For decades he has quietly labored on behalf of the church, producing in the process a mountain of important articles and book-length studies written from the point of view of the orthodox faith. Against all odds, Varacalli even managed to get a Center for Catholic Studies established at Nassau Community College of the State University of New York, where he has taught sociology for many years. He argued that if the college took its commitment to multiculturalism seriously, it needed to make all cultural perspectives, including Catholicism, available to its students. As we all know, that argument never works. But it worked, somehow, for the indefatigable Varacalli.

Varacalli's latest book, *The Catholic Experience in America*, begins with a brief history of the Catholic Church in the United States and then examines it in light of important sociological categories like race, sex, age, and region. Varacalli likewise covers the Eastern Catholic churches in America, as well as some of the ethnic traditions by which the Catholic faith has been mediated over the course of the American experience. In each case, Varacalli guides the reader effortlessly through the pertinent literature. He does not break much new ground here, but that is not the point of this useful book, which describes the Catholic experience in America from its origins to the present in light of the findings of the most important scholarly research.

Varacalli borrows the helpful term

"plausibility structure" from Peter Berger to refer to the necessary social and intellectual milieu that makes a particular religious tradition a vital factor in the lives of its adherents and inclines them to remain faithful to it. Berger doubted that such a thing could exist in the pluralistic United States, whose religious diversity he thought would inhibit the creation of such a milieu. Varacalli has elsewhere taken issue with Berger's view, arguing that the church itself can create this plausibility structure, even when the surrounding culture is indifferent or hostile, by means of the mutually supportive bodies that comprise its institutional life, including parishes, universities, media outlets, professional associations, and voluntary organizations.

Without this plausibility structure in place, the combined effect of non-Catholic and anti-Catholic influences on the Catholic population is bound to lead a good portion of them in the direction of those influences and away from

of the successful implementation of the strategy to construct a Catholic subculture," Varacalli observes, "America was on its way to becoming, if not a Catholic country, a country with a powerful and united Catholic presence."

This is not mere bravado: opponents of this growing Catholic influence, like Paul Blanshard, once spoke openly of the "Catholic problem"—that is, the rapidly increasing influence and numbers that the Catholic Church in America could boast. The baby boom was itself a good example of this increasingly important subsection of American society: Lutheran scholar Allan Carlson described that jump in American fertility rates as "largely a Roman Catholic event" rather than an undifferentiated or religiously homogeneous social phenomenon.

What happened that brought this enormously influential and spiritually and intellectually vibrant institution to the debilitated state in which we find it

## WHAT BROUGHT THIS ENORMOUSLY INFLUENTIAL AND INTELLECTUALLY VIBRANT INSTITUTION TO THE DEBILITATED STATE IN WHICH WE FIND IT TODAY?

Catholicism. According to Varacalli, "Given the fact that most people in any society 'worship' and consider 'sacred' the key values of that society's central value system"—what Emile Durkheim called the "collective conscience" of society—"it should come as little surprise that most ... contemporary American Catholics are 'nominally Catholic,' with some other set of socializing agents more fundamentally shaping their worldview, character, personality, and social and personal priorities."

Varacalli will have no truck with those who believe that the demands of Catholic obedience require them to disparage the pre-Vatican II church for its alleged failings. Varacalli speaks of the pre-conciliar church with deep respect and affection, for it had laboriously built and maintained the very structure whose absence Varacalli and the present writer now lament. "Precisely because

today? The usual answer is that the acid of secular modernity ate away at traditional Catholic life—a view not without merit, but whose explanatory power is not as strong as it first appears.

For one thing, to some extent the American bishops' de facto abdication of authority over American life and culture during the 1960s itself contributed to the success of the very cultural revolution that is said to have damaged the church so badly. It is hard for Americans, especially younger ones, to imagine a world in which Catholics, and even some non-Catholics, actually cared what the American bishops had to say. Today, apart from the occasional perfunctory statement on abortion that keeps the noisier rank and file happy, the bishops are all but silent (when they aren't recommending leftist economics). When they do speak on a matter of importance, no one even knows about

it. Had this hierarchical timidity not already been underway, the Catholic bishops—who at one time were a cultural force to be reckoned with—just might have helped stave off the worst effects of '60s liberalism.

More to the point, if Muslims in the West, as well as a good part of the Orthodox churches, have successfully preserved their respective identities in the face of modernity, then secularism and cultural revolution alone cannot account for the collapse of American Catholicism.

The fact is, no force has played a more decisive role in undermining the American Catholic plausibility structure than the American bishops themselves—with a few noble exceptions, to be sure. They have utterly failed to prevent, and in many cases have actually encouraged, horrific sex-education curricula, open dissent from Catholic moral teaching, and liturgical vandalism that would offend even a civilized pagan. Tod Brown, Bishop of California's Diocese of Orange, shouts and causes a scene when confronted with

ence in the American church, as "a bishop-maker who, working with former Archbishop Jean Jadot, gave the American hierarchy its pronounced pro-gay orientation."

In the last two years of his life, Cardinal Bernardin's closest priest friends from his native Diocese of Charleston all faced charges of molesting young boys. "As his friends back in Charleston continued bugging little boys," Likoudis remarked, "Bernardin used his influence, starting in 1968, as General Secretary of the U.S. Catholic Conference, to select bishops (many of whom are still ordinaries) who would, to put it charitably, condone and promote homosexuality as an acceptable lifestyle and tolerate the sexual abuse of children by priests." As Bernardin was dying, incidentally, he requested that the Windy City Gay Men's Chorus sing at the cathedral at his wake—which they eventually did, from a spot right next to the altar.

The Bernardin saga is actually far worse than even these quotations suggest, but pursuing this matter is not our

lege and Thomas Aquinas College, as well as new and basically sound religious orders—well aware, of course, that all these admittedly good things are but a fraction of what the Catholic Church could once boast.

But just because the gates of hell will not prevail against the church does not mean that orthodox Catholics will not still be forced to endure some terrible times. Varacalli believes the orthodox core he identifies in his book, while vastly outnumbered, may still be able to restore the church to health, but that humanly speaking it is not assured that this wing will triumph in the short or medium run.

One thing we can be reasonably sure of is that the American church will not go into formal schism, as some fear and as Varacalli proposes as one possible future (though without necessarily believing it himself). Unless and until the Vatican decides it is more committed to upholding Catholicism around the world than it is to "collegiality," a concept that has paralyzed Rome's power and will to act decisively to correct errant bishops, the American bishops can have all the leftism they like without the trouble of declaring a formal split with Rome. What would be the point of leaving if they can have exactly what they want right where they are?

On the other hand, Catholics can perhaps take comfort, if that is the right word, in the old saying that liberal Catholicism doesn't produce liberal Catholics, it produces non-Catholics. The Catholic population may well continue to decline throughout the Western world, but those who remain will disproportionately belong to the orthodox core to which Varacalli points as the church's hope for the future. At that point, perhaps, the rebuilding and re-evangelization—in short, the true restoration for which Catholics have waited for four decades—may finally begin. ■

*Thomas E. Woods Jr. is the author of How the Catholic Church Built Western Civilization, a free chapter of which is available at [ThomasEWoods.com](http://ThomasEWoods.com).*

## SECULARISM AND CULTURAL REVOLUTION ALONE CANNOT ACCOUNT FOR THE COLLAPSE OF AMERICAN CATHOLICISM.

a devout woman who simply wants to receive Holy Communion on her knees, but gives Communion to pro-abortion politicians without a moment's hesitation. We expect such cheerleaders of modernity to supervise and maintain structures designed to protect Catholicism from modernity's incursions?

Should you possess a perverse interest in coming face to face with the truly creepy—nay, sinister—poke around into the career of Joseph Cardinal Bernardin, the late Archbishop of Chicago, and see if you can say with a straight face that this was a pious, believing Catholic who did everything he could to uphold the honor of Christ and the church against the inroads of modern liberalism. Paul Likoudis of *The Wanderer* has described Cardinal Bernardin, a man of extraordinary influ-

purpose here. What matters is that somebody, somewhere, thought this was the best of all possible candidates to guide and shape the souls of a major American archdiocese. Innocent explanations for this do not immediately offer themselves. At the very least, we can say there is something deeply wrong with this picture—and that if we want to know where things have gone wrong, or why the Catholic plausibility structure lies in ruins, we need not look terribly far.

Varacalli believes, as any Catholic does, that the church possesses a divine promise that the gates of hell will not prevail against it. As evidence that a kind of restoration is already underway, he cites scholarly associations like the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars and the Society of Catholic Social Scientists, orthodox colleges like Christendom Col-

[*The Moral Imagination: From Edmund Burke to Lionel Trilling, Gertrude Himmelfarb, Ivan R. Dee, 259 pages*]

## Imaginative Moralists

By W. Wesley McDonald

THIS COLLECTION of previously published essays offers portraits of notable figures in humane letters and politics exemplifying what Gertrude Himmelfarb describes as “the moral imagination.” Each essay deals with a particular thinker or writer of the modern era broadly understood: Edmund Burke, George Eliot, Jane Austen, Charles Dickens, Benjamin Disraeli, John Stuart Mill, Walter Bagehot, John Buchan, the Knox family, Michael Oakeshott, Winston Churchill, and Lionel Trilling. All of these figures are English, except for the American Trilling, and many are Victorians. Himmelfarb’s explanation for recycling her essays in this volume is “to do justice to the ideas of men and women who have enriched my life, the lives of generations before me, and, I hope, of those after me.”

Edmund Burke coined the term “the moral imagination” and uses it to rhetorical effect in his *Reflections on the Revolution in France*. The English statesman invoked the moral imagination in his defense of the traditional moral and social order of Europe, and he did so against the pernicious influence of the “sophisters, oeconomists, and calculators” who imagined that mankind could be governed by reason alone. Unlike his adversaries, Burke understood that the wisdom of life consists of imaginatively absorbing and processing human experience acquired through the accumulated wisdom of our ancestors, the lessons of history, prescriptive institutions, religious dogmas, and the visions of great poets. When the moral imagination functions in an impaired manner or ceases to function altogether, the com-

munication between generations becomes difficult. Even more ominously, distorted views of human nature arise and what follows is the decay of moral character.

“All the pleasing illusions, which made power gentle, and obedience liberal,” Burke predicted, would be swept away by the revolutionaries’ “conquering empire of light and reason.” With their disappearance would go the sentiments of reverence for one’s ancestors, solicitude toward posterity, honor, manners, loyalty, and gallantry that from time immemorial made humane social existence possible and gave life meaning and direction. “All the super-added ideas, furnished from the wardrobe of a moral imagination, which the heart owns, and the understanding ratifies, as necessary to cover the defects of her naked shivering nature, and to raise it to dignity in our own estimation, are to be exploded as ridiculous, absurd, and antiquated fashion.” After the “decent drapery of life” is “rudely torn off,” “a king is but a man; a queen is but a woman; a woman is but an animal; and an animal not of the highest order.”

This “barbarous philosophy,” which reduces human nature to mere interests and passions, would give rise to a tyrannical order. Eradicate the old institutions, customs, manners, and religion of Europe, Burke insisted, and the void will be filled by governments ruling by brute force. Ideologies that aimed at the transformation of society and human nature would disturb European political life for the next two centuries.

Himmelfarb praises Burke’s appeal to history and tradition in the opening essay of this volume but in the process makes an odd argument. She attempts to prove that Burke was an apologist for Judaism. Her claim is especially suspect, considering Burke’s controversial references in his *Reflections* to “Jew brokers” and “money-jobbers, usurers, and Jews.” The idea about Burke’s supposed Jewish affinities came to our author after an Orthodox Jewish student of hers indicated “how affected she was by Burke’s book which gave her a new

understanding and appreciation of Judaism.” This “brave and mature mind” discerned in Burke’s critique of the Enlightenment

an explanation and appreciation of her own religion, which draws upon all the resources of history and humanity to sustain and invigorate itself: ancient traditions, the origins of which may have been lost in time; institutions and establishments, sanctified by age and experience, which bind people together in the common existence of daily life; prejudices and superstitions that betoken the larger truths of virtue and wisdom; and, not least, the ‘moral imagination’ that gives heart and soul, as well as mind, to a living faith.

To see a direct parallel between Burke’s defense of traditional wisdom and the Orthodox Jewish way of life is something of a stretch. “No religion is as tradition-bound and history-centered as Judaism,” Himmelfarb affirms. While that may be true, the question remains whether Jews cling to their traditions for reasons that would correspond to Burke’s thinking. Burke made the case for tradition in response to the French revolutionaries, she explains, who “in destroying whatever of the past they could, also tried to destroy that most venerable of institutions, the church, thus denying the most basic of human impulses, religion.” Burke warred against the revolutionary mentality that objected to the past as an obstacle to be overcome in mankind’s march toward greater justice, equality, and freedom. He emphasized history as a source of imaginative insight and self-knowledge. For devout Jews, on the other hand, tradition serves a more practical end: the preservation of their group against assimilation and the maintenance of the special relation enjoyed by their nation to the God of the Old Testament. The more strictly they adhere to the 613 Mosaic commandments and to the accompanying Rabbinic dicta, the less likely they will associate with outsiders and be absorbed by larger, competing cultures. The point is



not to denigrate either Burke's defense of tradition or the rules of Rabbinic Judaism. It is simply to note that the two appeals to tradition serve fundamentally different purposes.

Of particular note are Himmelfarb's chapters on George Eliot, Jane Austen, Charles Dickens, and John Stuart Mill, figures about whom she has written extensively during her long career as a historian of the Victorian era. She applies the insights gleaned from her study of Victorian manners and morals to the problems of contemporary American society.

Eliot's *Middlemarch* and Austen's *Emma* are novels, she tells us, which have "much in common." They rank among the greatest novels of the period and "each is, in its own way, a moral fable." In *Middlemarch*, Dorothea desires "to lead a life that transcends her personal interests and happiness, a purposeful, elevated, moral life." She marries morally flawed men even when better ones are available but does so for the right reasons. Although Dorothea does not live an exciting or even remotely romantic life, Himmelfarb admires her for being morally responsible. A dutiful wife and mother, Dorothea helps to improve the world, or at least that part that she touches. Austen's novel is about the "moral education" of a vain, selfish young lady who eventually comes to appreciate the importance of manners. Manners ease relations among the social ranks and classes that make up society: "For manners, even more than morals, lend themselves to the subtleties and nuances appropriate to the variety of classes and characters. And manners, more readily than morals, can be taught—as Emma was taught."

In one of his most compelling social novels, *Hard Times*, Charles Dickens likewise struggles perceptively with the reality of class tensions. Unlike the Marxists and socialists who view social relations in terms of economically based conflict, Dickens recognized that money "is the least immutable of all class distinctions, far less divisive than speech, manners, education or breeding." The

relations between employers and employees in early 19th-century England did not fit entirely certain stereotypes about an unbridgeable social gap. Although cruel, callous, and hypocritical, Josiah Bounderby, the factory owner in the novel, "is not an 'absentee' employer removed from his workers by an impassable barrier of class." The workers at Bounderby's factory are not oppressed or exploited in any Marxist sense. Rather, their "hard times" "had less to do with material or physical deprivation than it did with a certain spiritual impoverishment, the emptiness and meaninglessness of a mechanical, impersonal, soulless existence." Dickens's novels called attention to the lot of the poor "by personalizing, individualizing, and dramatizing them." His achievement was to have moved "the conscience of his own generation" by a "supreme act of the moral imagination."

Although not a major error, Himmelfarb misidentifies one of the main characters in Dickens's novel, Thomas Gradgrind, as a schoolteacher. A utilitarian enthusiast, who in the opening sentence of the novel orders the schoolmaster to teach only facts, Gradgrind is a retired hardware salesman. He owns the schoolhouse where Mr. McChoakumchild—aptly named because he chokes his charges on facts—teaches.

John Stuart Mill once famously described conservatives as "the stupid party." A rational humanitarian, social meliorist, extreme secularist, and anti-traditionalist, there is little in Mill that a person on the Right could warm to. Writing about him in *The Conservative Mind*, Russell Kirk harshly condemned his thought as follows: "It was Mill's extreme secularism, rather than his political ideas, which made him the enemy of all discerning conservatives." His ideas presaged modern liberalism's penchant for rational social planning. Himmelfarb, who authored an important book on Mill, tries to redeem his reputation among conservatives by bringing up "The Other Mill." This lesser known Mill expressed "a more subtle and complicated view of liberty" than what is found in the famous

tract *On Liberty*. He questioned the value of unlimited discussion, Bentham's utilitarianism, and secularism. Rather than being troubled by these inconsistencies in Mill's work, Himmelfarb views them as evidence of a mind capable of learning truths from Tory critics "which Liberals have forgotten." She hails Mill as "the most interesting intellectual of his time" whose ideas "remain remarkably prescient and pertinent today." But such scholars as Joseph Hamburger, Linda Raeder, and Maurice Cowling have thought differently about Mill's legacy to posterity. They have seen him as a prime participant in the change in English public opinion in the 19th-century toward the collectivism of the socialists. His Religion of Humanity, which Himmelfarb praises, preached that people could progress toward material perfection without the need for religious consolation. Himmelfarb heaps encomia on the "Other Mill" without taking on those who have disputed this image, sometimes with a wealth of scholarship.

She also claims that Lionel Trilling popularized the term "the moral imagination," without whom little would be known about this concept. While this may be widely believed in Himmelfarb's social circle, the credit for arousing and sustaining interest in the moral imagination, understood as an intuitively driven ethical insight, properly belongs for the most part to Irving Babbitt, Paul Elmer More, and Russell Kirk. Babbitt and More wrote on this subject extensively in the early part of the 20th century, and their relevant commentaries drew international attention during the interwar period. To whatever extent the moral imagination entered Trilling's universe of discourse, it was a widely discussed concept by the time he picked it up. Her failure to cite a personal acquaintance, Russell Kirk, who spent decades writing on the "moral imagination," is an astounding oversight and one that should not go unnoticed. ■

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# The Princess and I



A new and controversial film about Princess Diana's death is about to open in the Venice Film Festival this September, nine years and a few days

after the car accident that was heard around the world. One thing is for sure: the movie will reopen the bitter wounds caused by Diana's death. According to director Stephen Frears, the royal wedding was a barbaric occasion because "the girl was being sacrificed in a very, very primitive way. We couldn't have known what would happen to her, but I wasn't surprised when the fairytale didn't work out."

The movie shows the Queen to be unfeeling and cold, and she joins the public display of grief only at the behest of Tony Blair, who realizes that the future of the monarchy is in jeopardy. In another scene, Prince Charles asks his mother, "Why do the public hate us so much?" Frears is obviously a republican, because if there were a referendum on the British monarchy, it would win it by a very large margin—in my opinion close to 75 percent—despite such ludicrous figures as Princess Michael of Kent and other royal hangers-on. But let's take it from the top.

People are already jockeying for position in order to cash in on the tenth anniversary of Diana's death next year. First out of the blocks is Tina Brown, a lady who never met Diana but is considered a Diana expert by people who decide such matters. I, too, am guilty of cashing in. I am a contributor to the Larry King book on Diana coming out next year. I met King while on a book tour in 1990, and when I appeared on his program I let it drop that Chuck and Di were finished. Larry got all excited, forgot all about some minor celebrities waiting to go on, and pumped me non-

stop. After the breakup, I was told that Larry remembered what I had said and when the time came for the book asked for me to be included.

I first met Diana in 1987, at a grand English wedding in the country. I was in my cups and she mistook my slurring for a speech impediment. So she took my hand and slowly enunciated, "Take your time." She was already starting her queen of hearts period. When a friend of mine told her I was drunk, she burst out in laughter. Years later, when I was writing the Atticus column for the *Sunday Times of London*, she asked to meet me during yet another ball. By then she had separated from Charles and was holding a court of her own of sorts. I had written that she was unstable and was a threat

the manner she managed to avoid them was worthy of a spy novel—and she had me for lunch and dinner at Kensington Palace. Needless to say, I changed my tune, in no time becoming her greatest champion—so much so that a major royal asked me whether I was having an affair with her. When I said no, he wondered how I could switch sides so quickly.

Ironically, I was among the last to speak to her on that fateful day of Aug. 31. I rang her around six in the evening and asked her what was going on with Dodi Fayed. "Will you be wearing a shador any time soon?" "You know better than that," came her answer. I have always insisted that the romance with Dodi was a sham, a publicity stunt. She wanted to annoy the royals; he needed good publicity. I already knew she was seeing a Pakistani doctor who kept a very low profile. We all know the rest.

I WAS IN MY CUPS AND SHE MISTOOK MY SLURRING FOR A SPEECH IMPEDIMENT. SO SHE TOOK MY HAND AND SLOWLY ENUNCIATED, "TAKE YOUR TIME." SHE WAS ALREADY STARTING HER QUEEN OF HEARTS PERIOD.

to the monarchy. Alas, when I approached her table I was yet again under the influence, and when she asked me to sit down I missed my chair and ended up under the table. She shrieked with laughter, bent down, and asked me, "Do you really thing I'm crazy?" For once I came up with a good one: "All I know is that I'm crazy about you."

It was the start of a beautiful friendship, and that's all it was. I gave dinners in my house for her—I had told her that the last thing I needed was to have paparazzi camped outside my door, and

Diana died for a blurred picture. If Helen of Troy's face launched a thousand ships, Diana's launched a million tabloid front pages. She never once uttered, at least in my presence, a word against her in-laws or ex-husband and tried hard to live a useful life and to be a good mother. But it's a sad day indeed when publicity-seeking conspiracy theorists like Mohamed Fayed involve the queen and Prince Philip in their ludicrous conjectures. Conspiracy theories are almost as bad as the crime they profess to uncover. ■

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